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On the incarnation of the  
eternal Word



Humanism  
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OF THE ETERNAL WORD.

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ON

THE INCARNATION  
OF THE ETERNAL WORD.

BY THE REV. MARCUS DODS.

BELFORD.

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TO THE REV. JAMES MAC LAGAN,

MINISTER OF KINFAUNS,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS FRIEND.







## PREFACE.

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THAT the "Word was made flesh," and that he was not made sinful flesh, are propositions which lie at the very foundations of Christianity. That the first of these propositions is denied by any person in the present age, I have little ground for supposing; and I have not therefore judged it necessary to enter at any length into the proof of it, but have contented myself with simply stating the grounds upon which that proof may be founded. Until very lately, the other proposition would not have required, in a treatise like this, more than a passing notice. The earnestness however with which the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh is now maintained, renders it a matter of paramount importance. While therefore I am not aware that I have altogether omitted any material question that is intimately connected with the Incarnation, yet I have treated each more or less largely, according as I considered it as bearing more or less directly on that tenet.

Of the exculpatory explanation of the word ‘sinful,’ that it is applied to the humanity of our Lord only in a *passive* sense, that is, I suppose, synonymous with ‘peccable,’ I have not felt myself called upon to take any notice. For, *first*, the word has no such meaning. *Next*, if it had, yet some of the principal arguments in support of the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh are founded upon the *active* meaning of that word. *Thirdly*. Many other words equally offensive, and capable of no such explanation, are applied to the flesh of Christ, so that if that word was altogether abandoned, the tenet against which I contend remains unaltered. *Fourthly*. I deny that the word is applicable to Christ, or, if we must separate his humanity from himself, to the humanity of Christ, in any sense, active or passive. I deny that Christ, or the humanity of Christ, was peccable. *Finally*, the charge against the tenet of the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh is, that this tenet is rank Nestorianism ; and nothing can possibly shew a more thorough want of acquaintance with the subject, than an attempt to escape that charge by attaching to the word ‘sinful’ a meaning less offensive than that which it is usually understood to convey. The fact is, the very offensiveness of the word has been the means of making not a few overlook the real ground of the charge. Shocked, as they well might be, at hearing such language applied to Christ, or to a part of Christ, they have looked no farther, imagining that the whole offence consists in the use of such opprobrious

terms. That this is highly criminal, and revolting to the feelings of the Christian, there is no doubt. But the charge of heresy rests upon a ground totally distinct from the offensiveness of the language. Take away from the word 'sinful' every offensive idea, let it be used even as the most laudatory word in the language,—that does not in the slightest degree affect the charge of heresy that lies against the tenet that the flesh of Christ was sinful. The charge rests not at all on the meaning of the term, but solely on its application. The question is, can this term, be its meaning what it may, be applied to the flesh of Christ, while it cannot be applied to Christ himself or to God? While you say that the flesh of Christ was sinful, do you say also that Christ himself was sinful, or that God was sinful? If not,—if you say that you apply, to the flesh of Christ, terms which you will not apply to Christ or to God, then either this is the most direct and open and flagrant Nestorianism, or no such heresy ever existed. The meaning of the term is a matter of not the slightest earthly consequence, as far as the charge of Nestorianism is concerned; and the attempt to escape from the charge by palliating the offensiveness of the term, manifests an ignorance which certainly could not have been anticipated in any writer upon the subject in the present age. Employ the word 'sinful' if you will, as expressive of all that is good and great, that effects not in the slightest degree the charge of Nestorianism, as long as you say that,



whatever be its meaning, it may be applied to the flesh of Christ, but not to Christ himself, or to God. Nestorius attributed all that is good and great to the flesh of Christ; he was nevertheless a Nestorian still, and was justly condemned for making two persons in Christ, because he applied to the flesh of Christ language which however respectful, (and he used none that was not expressive of the highest respect,) he would not apply to God.

For these reasons I could not take the slightest notice of the attempt to evade the charge of Nestorianism, by palliating the offensiveness of the terms applied to the flesh of Christ. I have noticed it here, lest I should be suspected of overlooking it for a different reason. The ancient writers, especially after the time of Nestorius, were extremely guarded upon this subject. They would apply no term to the humanity of Christ which they would have scrupled to apply to Christ or to God. I may give an illustration of the nicety with which expressions were then sifted, out of *Facundus Hermianensis*, himself too labouring under a violent, though I think, groundless suspicion of Nestorianism, on account of his attachment to the celebrated *three chapters*. In Book I. chapter iii. of the work which he addressed to the Emperor Justinian, he proves that a person of the Trinity suffered for us. There were two ways of expressing this,—*unus de Trinitate passus est*,—one of the Trinity suffered, and *una de Trinitate persona passa est*,—one person of the Trinity suffered. At present a man would not

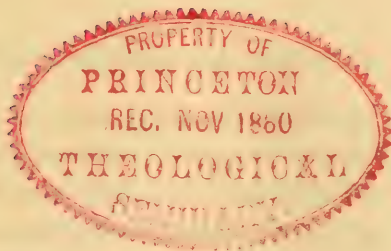
readily discover any difference between these two modes of expression, nor would easily detect a nearer approach to heresy in the one than in the other. Yet the difference was very clearly understood in the time of Justinian ; for while nobody felt any scruples about the latter expression, some Catholics hesitated to make use of the former, lest they should be supposed to ascribe suffering, not to a Divine person, but to the Divinity. *Facundus* on the contrary shews that the first is the proper mode of expression, as the latter does not stand sufficiently clear of Nestorianism. A Nestorian would not say that one of the Trinity suffered, but would say readily enough, that a person of the Trinity suffered, meaning that the Man Jesus Christ who suffered, bore the person of the Word, much in the same way as Paul bore it, when he said, “ If I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes I forgave it *in the person of Christ*.” What would have been thought, in those days, of the orthodoxy of men who openly avow their application, to the flesh of Christ, of terms which they will not apply to Christ ? And what would have been thought of their knowledge of Theology, when they attempted to escape the charge of heresy by alleging that these terms are not applied in the offensive sense that they are commonly understood to convey.

In Part II. I had originally intended to give a complete view of the Theology of the Primitive Church on the doctrine of the Incarnation. But this I soon found, however important, would require a work

much larger than I contemplated, or could easily command time to execute. I found it necessary therefore to direct my attention exclusively to the one point of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh. And on this point too, I found that I must confine myself to the writers of the first *four* centuries ; and even within these limits I have been compelled to omit by far the greater number of the passages that I had marked for quotation. A different arrangement of the testimonies from the primitive writers would have exhibited their strength to much greater advantage. Still the simple arrangement of them according to the order of time, has other advantages besides being the easiest. Few as they are, to what they might easily have been, and inartificial as is the arrangement, I trust they will be found perfectly sufficient to convince every impartial reader that to say, that the primitive church believed in the sinfulness of Christ, or in the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, is an assertion the extravagance of which has never been exceeded.

As a mite, however small, such as my ability permits me to contribute to the treasury of Gospel truth, I beg to commit my work to the candour of the Church, and to the blessing of its glorious Head.





## THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE doctrine of the Incarnation, so far as it can be understood by man, is sufficiently simple, and might be stated in a few sentences. But while errors are zealously propagated upon the subject, which go very directly to the total subversion of every doctrine of Christianity, a somewhat more detailed view of it seems to be called for, than would otherwise be necessary. I propose therefore to give such a general outline of the work of human redemption, and of the offices which Christ executes in the accomplishment of that work, as will enable us to see more distinctly the nature of the Incarnation. In doing this, I shall not fail to notice the bearing of the observations which may be made, upon the question of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity.

I shall not however limit my remarks to such points as may be necessary to prove that Christ was not fallen nor sinful, nor capable of falling or sinning. This may be proved in a few sentences, to any person capable of forming an opinion upon the subject, and willing to listen, either to the authority of Scripture, or to the dictates of reason. But while the proof of our Saviour's perfect sinlessness and impeccability will be with me a primary object, yet I trust, that the general view which I propose to take, will lead to observations which may be interesting to those whose minds are so fully satisfied upon that question, that they would not take the trouble to read a single page upon the subject.

This world was made by him who does nothing in vain. It was therefore made for some specific purpose, and that, a purpose worthy of the work, and of the events of which it has been the scene. We may also rest perfectly satisfied that it actually accomplishes the purpose for which it was made ; since it is certain that infinite wisdom could not err in the plan, nor infinite power fail in its execution. The question then is, what is the purpose for which the earth was made and man upon it ? The reply to this question is, that God made all things for the purpose of manifesting his own perfections. Reason can discover no other cause of creation ; and the fact that God made all things for his own glory, is recognized in every page of Scripture. But when it is said that God made all things for his own glory,

some explanation is necessary. We do not mean by this expression, that God made all things, or any thing, for the purpose of rendering himself more glorious than he was from all eternity, for that is impossible, his glory being alike incapable of increase or diminution ; but that he made all things for the purpose of making his glorious perfections known. And when it is said that God made all things for the purpose of manifesting his perfections, it is meant that the manifestation was to be made, not to himself, which is impossible, but to the creatures whom he made. It is obvious then that the manifestation was to be made both *by* the creatures, and *to* the creatures. They were to be both the manifesters of the Divine perfection, and the percipients of these perfections when manifested. Now as the purpose for which every creature is made, is that it may, according to its nature, manifest the perfections of God, and perceive them as manifested by itself, and by all other creatures, it follows as a necessary consequence, that to do this must be the glory and the happiness of the creature,—its being's end and aim : and it follows also, that the higher the degree in which any creature is capable of doing this, the higher is the degree of glory and of happiness which it is capable of attaining and enjoying.

That every thing, according to its nature and capacity, does both manifest the perfections of God, and rejoice in them, is a fact open to every one's observation, and is often referred to in Scripture. The



inanimate parts of God's works are often spoken of, not only as manifesting his perfections, but as rejoicing in the manifestation. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth the works of his hands. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge." The Sun rejoiceth to run his race: the heavens and the earth are called upon to hear the word of the Lord: the sea roars and the fulness thereof: the forests clap their hands: the mountains break forth into singing, and the little hills rejoice. These no doubt are figurative expressions, but they are expressions which shew the truth of the principle, that all things, according to their nature, manifest the perfections of God, and rejoice in them, when so manifested. The same remark still more obviously applies to such creatures as have life and feeling. The lower animals, which have received their instincts from God, and enjoy his bounties, though they know not, nor can know, any thing of him from whom their enjoyments come, afford a still more striking manifestation of his perfections, as is amply and beautifully illustrated in some of the latter chapters of the book of Job. But beyond all creatures, man is fitted, not merely to be the percipient of the Divine perfections, but also to manifest these perfections. And this he does not merely by that bodily structure, which is "fearfully and wonderfully made," nor by those mental faculties which raise him so high above the lower animals, which enable him to recall the

past, to anticipate the future, and to approximate the remote ; but more particularly and emphatically by the fall, the redemption, and the whole history of the human race. The first lesson that our Church teaches her children is, that “ The chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever ; ” and it is upon this broad basis that all sound Theology must be built.

But to the general rule that all existing things manifest the perfections of God, one important and extensive exception seems to be found in the existence of moral evil, which not only does not itself manifest the perfections of God, but which unfits the creature in whom it dwells from manifesting them. This exception, however, will be found on examination, to be only apparent, not real. The question as to the origin of moral evil I am not called upon to discuss. It lies, I apprehend, beyond the reach of man ; and the result of the attempts which have hitherto been made to decide that question, has certainly not been such as to encourage any further speculations on the subject. Of the greater part of these attempts, it would be well if it could be said simply, that they are failures. No question has ever led to more fatal consequences, or been productive of more disastrous results. Without therefore attempting to solve the difficulties attending this question, I may merely remark, that they are difficulties which press with equal weight upon every system ; for the actual existence of moral evil can

be denied by none. He who proves that good preponderates over evil, if his proof be sound, does something, perhaps, to remove the unfavourable impression with regard to the character of God, which the existence of evil has sometimes produced ; but he has done nothing to account for the origin of evil. He who proves that through the medium of evil, a degree of perfection and happiness is attained, which could not by any other means be reached, may be admitted to have completely reconciled its existence with the perfections of God ; but still he has not accounted for its origin. Probably however, he has gone as far as it is possible for man to go. Our business is not so much to inquire into the origin of things that lie beyond our reach, as to take them as we find them actually existing, and derive from them the lessons which their existence is fitted to teach. The Egyptian may know nothing of the sources of the Nile, or of the causes of its overflow ; but when he sees it carrying desolation over his fields, experience has taught him, that the temporary evil, of the cause of which he knows nothing, will prove a lasting benefit ; and that he shall not only reap a harvest when the flood has passed away, but a harvest of the richness of which the flood has been the cause. Even so we may not be permitted to open the sealed book, and to answer the question, whence cometh evil ? But while it standeth before us in all the undeniable reality of its actual existence, we may be able, with the light of Revelation for our

guide, to trace it to some of its beneficial results, and to see how, instead of unfitting the creature for the manifestation of the Divine perfections, it furnishes the means of a manifestation which never otherwise could have been given.

This will more clearly and strikingly appear, if we consider the work of redemption, for the sake of which the world was made, not with a reference to man alone, but with a reference to the whole rational family of God. Nor can we conceive that the world was made, and the work of redemption appointed solely for the sake of man. Man is the sole object of redemption ; but he was made so for the sake of others ; and the existence and the agency of other beings, both good and evil, and the deep and intense interest with which they look upon the work of human redemption, is not incidentally and obscurely hinted in the Bible, but forms an essential and prominent part of that system which the Bible reveals. The election of Israel out of all the tribes of earth, to be the chosen people of God, will afford us a correct illustration of the choice of the human race, from among all the races that constitute his moral government, as the objects in whose redemption he might manifest his glorious perfections to all. The Israelites were not chosen to be the peculiar people of God, on account of any superiority which they possessed over the rest of mankind ; for they were chosen in Abraham before they actually existed : so neither were mankind chosen to be the objects of God's



redeeming love on account of any merit of their own, for this idea is inconsistent with the fact that they needed redemption, but were chosen in Christ before they were created. The Israelites were not chosen that they alone might enjoy the blessing of God, but that through them, that blessing might come upon all nations : neither was man chosen to redemption that its benefits might redound to him alone, but “ to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.” The Israelites were chosen, that unto them God might commit his revelations for the use of all nations : so mankind were chosen, that in them God might manifest his perfections for the instruction of all his rational creatures. Though many of the chosen Israel perished in their sins, yet the great purposes for which that people was chosen were effectually accomplished : so, though multitudes of the human race perish, yet the great purposes for which they were chosen, as the objects of the work of redemption, are not the less effectually accomplished. As the Israelites, though far behind most other nations in arts and sciences, yet taught to the world something infinitely more valuable than aught that art or science were ever capable of discovering : so, the human race, though far inferior to many other races, yet manifest to all a knowledge of the character and perfections of God, which otherwise they could never have known. And finally, as the Israelites are still destined

to stand at the very head of the human race, and to be the most glorious of nations: even so, the human race, though now so low, are destined to take their place at the head of all the families of God. Human nature is, at this moment, the most glorious of created natures, taken, in its assumption by the Son, into a nearness of union with the Godhead, which none other enjoys; and where our head is, there all his true members shall in due time be. As the man Christ Jesus passed through all suffering into glory, even so, his people, exposed to dangers which others never knew, and made triumphant through his Spirit dwelling in them, rise to honours with which others can never be crowned; and, living monuments of all those divine perfections which were displayed in their redemption, living records of the glory of God, they will awaken among the hosts of heaven a song which, throughout eternity, will be ever new. In fine, if all things were made for the purpose of manifesting, to the creatures, the perfections of the Creator, then, above all things with which we are acquainted, must the work of redemption, the most glorious of all the works which we know, be designed and fitted for this great end.

In order to see how the human race, in their fall and redemption, acquire for themselves, and communicate to others, this knowledge of the perfections of the Creator, it will be necessary to go back to a period when as yet there was no sin in the dominions of God,—when there were none but unfallen beings

in existence. Such beings, it is clear, could have but a very limited and defective view of the nature and character of God. From his works they would be able to infer that he was possessed of great wisdom, and of great power; and, from the happiness which they enjoyed, they would be persuaded of his great goodness. But that his wisdom was omniscience,—that his power was omnipotence,—that his goodness could extend, not merely to the unfallen and sinless creature, but also to the “unthankful and the evil,” they could not by any possibility know. Of his mercy it is obvious they could not possibly have any idea whatever; and of all his other perfections they could have very little, if any knowledge, at all. They could not tell if he were immutable, when nothing had ever occurred to put his mutability to the test. For the same reason, they could not tell if he were inflexibly just, unchangeably true, infinitely and unalterably holy. They might be able to prove by abstract reasonings, the probability that he possessed these perfections; but these proofs would be similar in their nature, to the proof of the immortality of the soul by Plato or Seneca,—a fine speculation, but producing no such conviction as to become a living active principle, to be held fast, and acted upon, and carried out to all its practical results, at the expense of all that is dear in life, or at the expense of life itself.

The perfections of God, in order to be fully known, must be seen, carried out into actual operation; and

operating too under such circumstances as to prove them to be absolutely infinite. But this exhibition could not be made while none but unfallen beings existed. A large family, living under the eye of a father whom not one of them has ever offended, may have a considerable knowledge of his character; yet it is clear that that knowledge must be imperfect and defective. They may know that he is true, and just, and good; but they cannot tell to what extent his truth, his justice, his goodness may reach, because nothing has ever occurred which could afford an occasion of trying, of limiting, or restraining, the exercise of these qualities. But let some individual of the family offend him, and then, in his treatment of that individual, all the rest of the family, as well as the offender himself, will obtain a new view, and consequently a more extended knowledge, of his character. While the prodigal son dwelt beneath his father's roof, he knew well the goodness of his father's heart. But he was far from knowing the whole extent of that goodness. When pining in want and misery he resolved to return to his paternal home, all the extent to which he ventured to hope that his Father's goodness could go, was to receive and treat him not as a son, but as a hired servant, and that too only upon the most earnest entreaty, and the most lowly confession of his errors. But when his return was welcomed with joy and gladness, when he felt his father's embrace, saw himself arrayed in the richest robes, and feasted in the most sumptuous



manner, then did he know that his father possessed a goodness, the existence of which he did not dare previously to believe. Even so, the Great Father of All, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, hath, out of the ruins of the human race, drawn an exhibition of his own character, from which angels not less than men, acquire new views and more extended knowledge of it. And as the human race consists of endless myriads of prodigals, some of whom never return, and as every individual differs in some respects, in his conduct and treatment from every other, so the angels who delight to trace the ways of God, derive from every individual a somewhat different view, and a somewhat increased knowledge of his character. And as that knowledge constitutes the very end and aim of their being, though possibly no actual danger might result to them from our fall, yet their glory and their happiness have received, and will receive, an incalculable augmentation, from the work of our redemption.

With the commencement of moral evil then, whatever was its origin, commenced a new and glorious development of the divine perfections.—When part of the angels sinned, and for their sin were doomed to punishment, being driven out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, God was seen in a new relation, and an additional view of his character would be given. Something would be known of him, that was not

known before. But then this knowledge, like most other pieces of knowledge in intelligent minds, would give rise to some doubts, and to questions of no easy solution. Some illustration of God's displeasure against sin, and of his power to punish it, would be given; and they would feel that even though possessed of angelic excellence, they must obey or suffer. But then they would now know sin, of which, before its actual existence among them, they probably had not even an idea. And that idea would necessarily be attended with a painful feeling,—the feeling of insecurity. The offenders it is true, were driven out; but they now knew, what probably they knew not before, that they were liable to sin and to punishment; and we may easily conceive how deeply such a knowledge would affect their happiness. Their perfect and unsuspecting confidence in, and reliance upon each other, would be much abated, and the delight of their mutual communications greatly lessened. The same causes that had already produced sin among them, might produce the same effect again, and by successive defections, the throne of God might be left without a worshipper. The perplexing question, Whence cometh evil? would naturally suggest itself; and it would also naturally occur to them to inquire, how it happened that sin could possibly enter into the dominions of God at all? If he were perfectly holy, then must he hate sin; and if he were omniscient and omnipotent, why did he not foresee and prevent that, which, as holy, he must hate,—that, which, as

rebellion against his own authority, he must hate, whether holy or not? And these are questions, to the solution of which, there is no reason to suppose that they had the means of making any approach to a satisfactory reply. Hence painful fears and doubts would be the result of the first appearance of sin in heaven.

When they saw man made, a part of their fears would be removed. They would see that though all angels should rebel, there could be no room to fear lest "heaven should want inhabitants, or God want praise." But the next step in the providence of God, the fall of man, would bring back all their fears with increased pressure. Was God really so little able to resist the rebels, that he could not uphold his own fair workmanship from being led away captive by them? What then was the use of this creating power, if he could not preserve what he created, but made it only that it might afford a triumph to his enemies? When they saw Satan become the god of this world, would not the power and other perfections of God stand greatly in doubt? The sons of God shouted for joy when man was made; and that shout was expressive, not simply of adoration at seeing a new exhibition of their Maker's power, but also of the delight which they felt, at having, by this exhibition of his power, so many of their fears removed, which the entrance of sin had awakened. And proportioned to the delight which they felt and expressed at man's creation, would necessarily be the

consternation with which they beheld his fall. And when they heard it declared that man, though fallen, taken captive by Satan, and now leagued with him in rebellion against God, yet was not to be lost, what would be the result of such a declaration? Probably new doubts, and new fears. Creation they had seen, and knew what that was. Sin also they had seen, and knew what the consequence of that was. But redemption was something as yet unheard of, and they would naturally ask, what new thing is this? or how can it possibly be? When angels fell, they were driven away in their wickedness, and no hope of restoration was held out to them. Yet they still possessed so much power as to carry away man into rebellion; and now he is not to die, even after the sentence denounced,—“In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”<sup>1</sup> Was God to prove himself regardless of his truth, by recalling the sentence so solemnly pronounced? Was he to abandon his own holy law to violation, and his authority to contempt, by extending mercy to the transgressors? Was the majesty of the divine government to be insulted with impunity? and was the holiness of God to stoop to hold communion with that which was polluted? In short, was God to prove that Immutability formed no part of his character? If he was destitute of any one of these perfections, or if he possessed any of them only in a limited degree, and if angels were about to see that limit reached, then their happiness

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.



was gone. His immutability stood most in doubt, and most of all was it necessary that they should be well assured of this. For what other security had they for the continuance of their happiness, than this, that he who had made them, and had bestowed that happiness upon them, was a being who could not change? Let this once be made doubtful, and then, in addition to the feeling of insecurity arising from a sense of their own liability to sin, they would experience the still more painful feeling of insecurity, derived from the mutability of the divine character. When they saw the newly created being, involved almost immediately in spiritual death, and given up to moral bondage, it is obvious that whether this arose from the want of power, or from the want of will in the Creator, to sustain him, they could contemplate the event with no other feelings than those of terror and dismay.

Had man, under these circumstances, been driven away in his wickedness, this would have done nothing to alleviate their dismay; as such a consequence of the fall would have seemed to render useless the creating power of God: for to what purpose served the power of creating, if separated from a power of sustaining,—if he could not save those whom he created from becoming the servants of another lord? But then how could man possibly be pardoned and saved, without inducing all the painful consequences just referred to? God had most positively declared that on the day on which he transgressed, he should

die. Could that sentence be suspended, or even its execution delayed, without creating some question as to how far his truth might be relied upon? If the law of God was violated, and the authority of God trampled upon, not merely with impunity, but with favour to the transgressor, was not this in effect to abrogate the law? Even under the Christian dispensation, which so awfully demonstrates the sanctity of the law, how difficult is it to prevent men from “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness,” and from sinning “because grace abounds!” But had God forgiven men, without any demonstration of the holiness, and of the unalterable nature of the law, this would have been to set open a flood-gate for the introduction of all iniquity. That God could by a mere act of power, or as it ought rather to be called in this case, of *force*, have rescued the sinner from the grasp of Satan, and have created him anew, and have reinstated him in higher happiness than that from which he fell, may be perfectly true. But what then became of his moral attributes? Such an act of power, if it had been an act of mercy to the guilty, would at the same time have been an act of great cruelty to the innocent. For, who among his unfallen creatures, could have in this case avoided the conclusion, that he who could act so was an unholy, an unjust, a mutable, nay a capricious being? He would have appeared to be capricious in this, that if the law was to be virtually abrogated by the acquittal of one class of fallen creatures, it would be

impossible to discover any reason why the same dishonoured law should be applied, in all its unabated rigour to another class.

We are often told that it is an easy thing for God to forgive sin,—that there is nothing to prevent him from withdrawing his right to punish the guilty, and that such an act of grace would highly illustrate his goodness, and awaken songs of praise among both angels and men. Nothing, however, can well be more evident than the truth of the very reverse of this. Among men such an act of grace would have been, and could have been productive of nothing else, than the most unrestrained licentiousness ; and among angels of nothing but consternation and dismay ; and an act of mercy so exercised would have effectually defeated every purpose of mercy. Every sinner thus rescued by an act of omnipotent power, not from the grasp of Satan, but from the righteous sentence of God's most holy law, would have been a new monument of a mutable God, and of a despised law ; and instead of being hailed on his entrance into heaven, with songs of joy, would have been received with expressions of jealousy and fear. It is easy, it is said, for God to depart from his right to punish. But by whom is this said ? By men who have never been convinced of sin, who know not how exceedingly sinful a thing it is ; who know nothing of the extent and spirituality of the law of God, and have never felt their need of, and dependence upon, a Saviour. Ask the awakened

sinner who has felt the terrors of the law coming like water into his bowels, and like oil into his bones, if *he* thinks it an easy thing for God to forgive sin? He will tell you that when a violated law set all his sins in array before him, and when conscience confirmed the sentence of the law, so far was he from thinking it an easy thing for God to forgive his sins, that hardly all the grace manifested in the Gospel, could persuade him to believe it possible, that even with God, there could be an extent of mercy sufficient to forgive his sins,—that while he felt no difficulty in believing the general proposition, that with God there is mercy for sinners, he feels that nothing but a divine power could have enabled him to apply the general proposition to his own particular case, and to believe that there was mercy with God sufficient for *him*. It is easy we are often told, for God, by a mere act of grace to pardon, and by a mere act of power to regenerate and save sinners. It is easy for him to forego his right to punish the transgressor. But it is not seen, nor, save by the awakened sinner, can be seen, that in so doing he foregoes all the inflexibility of his justice, all the sacredness of his truth, all the sanctity of his law, all the spotless purity of his holiness, and all the majesty of his government, and is destroying all the security that is founded on the immutability of his character. And as to the mercy which it is supposed would have been illustrated by such an act of grace, I think it has been shown already, and will be more dis-



tinctly shown afterwards, that mercy would have been outraged by such a proceeding. Moreover, the pardon of sin, without any manifestation of its hatefulness, and of the perfections of God, would have brought both his wisdom and power into question. For surely it would have exhibited much more of both, to sustain man from falling at all, than to leave him to fall, merely in order to rescue him from the effects of his fall, by an exercise of power put forth at the expense of all his moral attributes ; while all the lessons taught by the work of redemption, for the sake of which the earth was made, and man upon it, would not only have been entirely lost, but it would have been impossible to determine, why some men were saved, and others left to perish,—why grace was offered to one fallen race, and none offered to another ; and it would indeed have been a question which defied solution, for what one useful purpose could such a being as man possibly have been made ? The Jews erred grievously when they supposed that the dispensation, of which they were the recipients, terminated in themselves, and was given them, not for the sake, but to the exclusion of all other nations. And we carry the same error to a much more pernicious extent, and still more effectually mar the glory of the work of redemption, when we consider that work as terminating in man,—when we consider ourselves as an insulated race, and not as beings intimately connected with, and made for the sake of all the rational family of God. We might just

as rationally hope to ascertain the true position and motions of the earth, without referring to the heavenly bodies with which it is connected, and of the system constituted by which, it is an essential and integral part, as hope to ascertain the true position and the use of such a being as man, and the bearing of the work of redemption, without referring to those heavenly intelligences with whom he is intimately connected,—a connection recognized in every page of the Bible. Had no nation been to be blessed but the Jews, the Jews would never have been chosen ; and had no being been to profit by the work of redemption but man, it seems impossible to conceive one rational purpose that could be answered, by such a creature as man being made at all. The Sadducee might think himself exceedingly learned, and very far above all vulgar prejudices, when he could prove that there was “neither angel nor spirit ;” and might shew what a canting hypocrite was the Pharisee who confessed both. But if the Pharisees could not convince them out of the Law of Moses, there were not wanting heathens who stood forward to vindicate their prerogatives as men, and to prove the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul. And the modern infidel may think himself exceedingly learned, and very far above all vulgar and superstitious prejudices, when he denies,—and perhaps founds his denial on the very alleged fact of the insignificance of man,—all the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. But even were we unable to vindicate the truth, other orders

of beings would come forward to vindicate their own share in the glorious work of man's redemption. The Sadducee and the infidel may perish in groping round the contracted circle of their own dark and narrow conceptions ; but the enlightened among men, and higher orders of beings, will contemplate with the eye of a deep veneration, and of an intense interest, that glorious work, from which they have already learned much, and from the farther development and the final consummation of which, they expect yet to learn more, of the character of the Almighty Maker and Ruler of all.

It was when it was declared that fallen man should be saved, and when it appeared not how that salvation could be effected, without casting doubt and distrust over all the perfections of God, unhinging all the principles upon which his moral government was founded, and thus producing the most disastrous and fatal consequences throughout the whole universe, that the great mystery of redemption, into which angels desire to look, and from which they learn wisdom, began to run its mighty course. It was then that the eternal Word was announced as the Redeemer of the fallen race, who should rescue them from their thralldom, and bring them back to holiness, to happiness and to God. Now in the accomplishment of this work, the Redeemer has three parties to deal with,—him who holds the captives in bondage,—the captives themselves so held in bondage—and him, who, for their rebellion, gave them up to captivity : and each

of these parties renders the possession of certain powers essentially necessary in the Redeemer. He who holds the captives in bondage may be determined that they shall not go free for any price, or upon any consideration. The Redeemer therefore, must of necessity possess power to compel him to let them go. The captives may be utterly insensible to the misery of their bondage, and unwilling to be delivered. The Redeemer therefore must possess a power to convince them of the misery of their state, and to awaken in their hearts the desire of liberty. The captives may be totally ignorant of the way that leads to the home whence they have been exiled, and totally incapable of encountering the manifold difficulties and dangers with which that way abounds. The Redeemer therefore must possess power both to lead them in the right way, and to support and strengthen and uphold them against all opposition. The captives may have acquired habits and dispositions which totally incapacitate them for the occupations and enjoyments of the country to which they are to be brought. The Redeemer therefore must possess power to change the whole tenour and current of their habits, affections, and dispositions. The captives may have been driven from home for their crimes, and their return would be an infringement of that law by which they were condemned, a dishonour to the sovereign by whom they were banished, and dangerous to those of his subjects who never rebelled. The Redeemer therefore must



possess a power to insure them a welcome reception ; that is, he must bring them back in such a way as to magnify and make honourable the law by which they were condemned,—to display the equity and justice, as well as the goodness and mercy of the sovereign by whom they were exiled,—to give fresh stability to all the principles of his moral government, and additional security to all his faithful subjects. He must be able to reconcile, and to preserve in the most indissoluble union, these apparently most irreconcilable things, the glory of God, and the safety of the sinner,—to unite, in most harmonious union, these apparent contraries, the mercy that pleaded for the sinner's safety, with the truth that demanded his punishment,—the righteousness that condemned him, with the peace that was promised him. Such are the powers which it is essentially necessary that the Redeemer should possess ; or to sum up all these powers in three words, he must be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, in the highest and most extensive application of these terms. Such powers, it is clear, no created being could by any possibility possess ; but such powers were found in the Son. Announced therefore as the Redeemer of men, he was announced as Prophet, Priest, and King ; and the first acts of each of these offices he performed personally. As Prophet he announced to man the hope of deliverance through the “ woman's seed.” As Priest he appointed sacrifices as typical of his own death for sinners, and clothed our first parents with the skins of slain

beasts, instead of their own fig leaves, as a token that he would cover their spiritual nakedness by a righteousness much more effectual than any that they could provide.<sup>1</sup> And as King he sent them forth to cultivate the ground, until they should return to the dust from which they were taken. These offices, thus formally and personally assumed by the Son, were thenceforth delegated to his representatives, till the fulness of time should arrive for his coming in the flesh. To what extent the knowledge of men or of angels, as to these offices might then go, we have no means of ascertaining ; but we may be well assured, that they would study with the most careful attention every type and every prophecy, which could throw light upon so important a subject ; and this we know, that at that period commenced, and, in the evolution of the work of redemption, was gradually unfolded for the instruction of both, an exhibition of the glory of God's perfections, of the majesty and stability of God's government, and of the sanctity of God's law, far beyond aught that could have been derived either from the sinless obedience, or from the endless punishment of all created beings.

It will be observed that I here consider the Son, not simply as elected to, but as actually invested with the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and as discharging the duties of these offices, from the moment

<sup>1</sup> This may appear rather a forced interpretation of this transaction. It has however been sanctioned by some able and sober writers ; among others, by the Rev. C. Benson in his *Hulsean Lectures on Scripture Difficulties*.

of the fall. After that period, every prophet that announced to the church any portion of the will of God, received his commission from him who is the great and only Prophet,—every priest who ever offered an acceptable sacrifice to God, had it accepted only through Him who is the great and only Priest,—every king that ever reigned was the delegate of, and accountable to Him who is the great and only King. During the period anterior to his incarnation, and from the beginning, he acted as the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. The proof of this however will occur more naturally afterwards; and I might proceed at once to consider the circumstances attending the incarnation, but a preliminary question occurs, which must be first disposed of. The question to which I refer is one that has been often asked, If the incarnation was necessary, why was it so long delayed? To this it may be replied, that had not the incarnation been delayed, its necessity would not have been seen. Had the Word been made flesh immediately on the Fall, sin would not have had sufficient time to develope its native malignity, nor would the miserable and degraded state of man have sufficiently appeared. It was necessary that man should be placed in a great variety of situations, both before and after the Incarnation, that by the endless variety of situations in which he was placed, might be seen the utter helplessness and hopelessness of his state; and his utter inability, under any circumstances, of emancipating himself from the bondage of Satan.

Under the patriarchial dispensation, there were circumstances extremely favourable to the cultivation of holiness, and the return of men to God. Paradise was as yet before their eyes, though guarded by the heavenly host and by the flaming sword. Adam lived for many ages among them, to tell them of the blessedness of the state from which he had fallen, and to tell them too, upon the authority of the divine promise, of the hope of being restored to that state,—and Cain was among them, a monument of the miserable consequences of unsubdued passion. Under these circumstances, we should naturally expect to find them looking to Paradise, and deploring with the deepest penitence the happiness they had lost; and looking up to God with humble gratitude for the hope of restoration; and seeking by the most lowly and earnest obedience to secure the speedy fulfilment of the promise. But what do we in reality find? A God who could not be at that time unknown, yet utterly despised, and wickedness prevailing to an extent which has never been surpassed.

Immediately after the deluge, it might have been expected that men, with the recent traces of so awful a visitation every where before their eyes, would have been effectually deterred from sin. So far however was this from being the case, that they went on increasing in iniquity, till the very name of the true God was forgotten, and his worship abandoned for idolatry of every form. Men were therefore left to use or abuse the knowledge already given, as they



were able, or disposed ; and the whole history of the heathen world proves how utterly lost, how hopelessly degraded man is. And if the exhibition was continued down to the time of our Saviour's appearance, it cannot be thought to have been continued too long ; since, though through the greater part of the world, it has been continued down to the present day, it has not yet sufficiently impressed men with the humbling, but necessary lesson, which it is designed, and so well fitted to teach,—no, nor though continued to eternity ever will teach it. For, in the face of all the multiplied and deplorable proofs afforded by the odious, the disgusting and revolting practices of idolatry, both in ancient and in modern times, both among savage and civilized heathens, of the utter imbecility of man's understanding, the perversion of his reason, the corruption of his heart, and his total inability to rescue himself from the state of deep degradation into which he has fallen, there are men who can deny that man is a fallen being at all, and can talk of the extent of the human understanding, and of the sufficiency, nay the glory of human reason. Human reason is indeed a glorious thing when guided and sustained by the Spirit of God ; but such men do themselves shew how utterly perverted and degraded it is, when left to its own resources, and how hopelessly they are blinded, when they can gravely maintain a position, the utter absurdity of which is written, in lines of horror and of blood, on every page of the history of man ; and

when, indebted as they are to the knowledge communicated by the great Prophet, for their own exemption from the degradation of saying "to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth," they can yet pretend that no revelation of God was necessary. If the history of the world teaches any thing, it surely teaches this, that "the world by wisdom never knew God." Revelation is necessary even to the existence of pure Theism. Polytheism and idolatry is all that man has ever proved himself capable of attaining by his own unaided reason. *Somniaverat Deum, non cognoverat*, saith Lactantius of Plato ; and what was said of Plato, may well be said, I suppose, of all other heathens.

But impressively as the lesson of man's helpless and degraded state is taught by the whole history of man, when left to himself, or with only a traditional revelation to guide him, the lesson is rendered still more impressive by the exceptions to this state which have occurred. The Israelites were placed in circumstances which might have been expected to repress every corrupt propensity, and to ensure the most devoted obedience. God chose them for his own peculiar people, he was continually manifesting his power, and his presence among them, and that very often in a manner directly miraculous ; he gave them a ritual so splendid as to leave them no room to look with envy upon the most splendid ceremonies of the heathens around them ; he hired them to obedience by the worldly prosperity which it never

failed to produce, and deterred them from rebellion by the sufferings with which it never failed to be followed. Under such circumstances one would think disobedience almost impossible. And if men were unfallen creatures, or if the perversion of their understanding, and the corruption of their heart, were capable of being corrected by any circumstances however favourable, it would have been so. But what is their whole history? Surely it is a most decisive proof that the native tendencies of the human heart to evil, and the imbecility of the human understanding, are not to be corrected by any external circumstances, however fitted for that purpose. Over barriers which one would conceive to have been almost unsurmountable, they rushed into the most unnatural, and most revolting of the practices of the heathen around them.

It may be said, however, that the dispensation under which the Israelites were placed, though it did present strong motives to obedience, and enlisted the selfish passions on the side of holiness, by its temporal rewards and punishments, was yet defective. It preceded the Incarnation, and the degree of knowledge as to man's eternal prospects, which it communicated, was extremely defective, and wrapped up in all the obscurity of types and shadows. Its appeals to the higher principles of human nature were indistinct, and therefore feeble ; and therefore though men under this dispensation did prove both that their reason was blind, and their hearts corrupt ; yet still,

man, placed under other circumstances, and under a dispensation more distinctly and more directly appealing to the higher principles of our nature, might prove that that blindness of reason, and that corruption of heart, may be cured, without the direct and immediate agency of the Spirit of God. The experiment has been made. The great Prophet came, and communicated to men that knowledge of divine things, to which no addition has ever been made. He gave to men instructions so clear that it is impossible to mistake them ; he sanctioned these instructions by motives of the most resistless urgency, by the prospect of eternal happiness on the one hand, and of eternal woe on the other ; he animated them to obedience by providing for them the most effectual assistance and support ; and he gave them the most perfect security that their labour should not be in vain, but that their reward should be sure. He established a dispensation which appeals, in the most direct and forcible manner, to all that is lofty in human thought, and to all that is sensible in human feeling, and to all that is pure in human affection ; and what was the result ? Did the moral darkness of the world pass away before this glorious light, like the darkness of night before the rising sun ? Did men every where and eagerly embrace the “ glad tidings of great joy ” which were announced to them ? Exulting in that “ life and immortality ” which had been brought to light, did the securing of, and preparation for that life and immortality, become the engrossing object



of all their thoughts, sinking all the petty concerns of time into insignificance? No. The result has proved in the most impressive and decisive manner, not only that man is a fallen being, but fallen to a depth from which he cannot be recovered by any means, however well adapted to that end, without the immediate agency of God : that there is an inveteracy in the perversion of man's reason, and in the corruption of his heart, which no other hand can cure. It is in vain that we are surrounded by all the advantages for moral improvement which God can bestow ; it is in vain that weapons of the most heavenly temper are put into our hands ; till we be quickened by the Spirit, the arm that should wield them is unnerved in all the torpor of spiritual death. The lesson taught by the whole history of Christianity is, that the possession of a dispensation of a religion of absolute and unimproveable perfection, does not in the slightest degree emancipate us from a total dependence upon God, for the possession of all moral good.

Yet that lesson, though so impressively taught, has been very imperfectly learned. There are many, and many of those too who believe the gospel, who maintain that man is not a totally corrupted and depraved creature,—that death and natural evil are the only consequences derived to us from the fall,—and that since God has given to us the gospel, we require no farther aid, but are abundantly able to apply and to improve it of ourselves. Now if there be men who, with the history of Christianity actually

before their eyes, can maintain such doctrines as these, what would have been the consequence, had the gospel, at its first promulgation, spread with resistless force through all the world, and manifested its enlightening and purifying effect in every heart? We are very apt to regret that this should not actually have been the case, and infidelity has reared some of its puny arguments upon the fact, that Christianity has neither been communicated to all lands, nor has given spiritual life to all, to whom it has been communicated. But this fact, like all other facts when properly understood, is a proof of the wisdom of him who does all things well. Had our Lord's object in the establishment of the new dispensation been to save the greatest possible number of persons, in the shortest possible space of time, then the unresisted and universal triumph of the gospel would have been the most direct means of accomplishing his design. But if his object was to give the most important possible instruction to the greatest possible number, both of angels and men, then the early and universal triumph of the Gospel would have defeated that purpose. For if men who see the determined resistance which has been offered to the reception of the Gospel in all ages and countries, and who are aware of the perpetual tendency in those who do receive it, to modify it to their own views, can yet maintain such doctrines as those just referred to, what would have been the consequence, had the Gos-

pel been uniformly successful. Had the Gospel been received in all its simplicity, and obeyed by every one to whom it was announced,—had it operated with all the regularity and efficiency of a physical cause, then much more in that case would the idolatry have been committed, of attributing to the means, that efficiency which belongs only to the Holy Spirit. If men can forget and deny their dependence on the Spirit now, how much more would it have been denied under such circumstances? Men would have thought that to become a Christian, was a mere matter of course ; and had fruit been as regularly produced in the one case as in the other, would have felt the necessity of the agency of the Spirit, to render the seed of the word fruitful in their hearts, just as little as they are now apt to see the necessity of a divine agency to fructify the seed in their fields. Thus the agency of the Holy Spirit,—a doctrine as essential to the Gospel as that of the atonement itself—would have been denied ; and this would speedily have put an end to Christianity. Thus the early and universal triumph of the Gospel, would have ensured its early and universal overthrow.

To this conclusion we are clearly led by the history of the past ; and the history of the future, as far as it is revealed, leads us still more clearly to the same conclusion. God will not give his glory to another, no, not even to the Bible ; nor will permit men to believe that the Gospel makes its way in the world, or in the human heart by its own intrinsic power and excel-

lence, but by his Spirit. This is taught by the past and the present history of Christianity, and the Millenium is approaching to give to this truth the last decisive proof, and to render it for ever impossible to doubt, that for the reception and possession of all spiritual good, man is immediately dependent on God, without whom he can never either acquire or retain one moral excellence. The Millennium is described as a state of universal righteousness. It is the triumph of the Gospel, when Christ shall possess the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. But we are told that this state of universal righteousness is to terminate in a state of almost universal apostacy. Now what is to bring so holy and blessed a state to such a fearful termination? It is plain that this can happen only from the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit; and it is equally plain that the Holy Spirit will not withdraw, till men have forgotten their dependence upon him, and ceased to pray for him. And that they will do this we may be certain both from the history of the past, and from what we see at present. We live in most eventful times. The elements of some mighty movement have, for some years, been gathering around us, with unexampled rapidity. The ancient bonds of society seem to be worn out, and bursting asunder. The old despotisms appear to be crumbling to dust, together with the superstition on which they lean; while the present aspect of society promises to substitute in their room nothing better than liberalism



allied with infidelity,—an infidelity so much the more dangerous, in that it has assumed the form of Christian theology, and proclaims its dogmas by the mouths of men who eat the bread of the Church, and call themselves her ministers. Yet under circumstances so appalling, when we feel beneath our feet, what seems to be the heave and the swell of the approaching earthquakes, men can pillow their heads in security, and dream of the uninterrupted advance of society to perfection, and loudly proclaim that men have now reached a point in the progress of improvement, from which there is not only no danger, but no possibility of receding. Now if men can reason in this manner at present, how much more will they reason thus, toward the end of the Millennium, when circumstances will afford an infinitely better ground for such reasonings, than any that can be found at present? Yes, after centuries of universal righteousness, men will begin to forget that they are corrupted and depraved creatures ; that for all their excellences they are indebted to the quickening energy, and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit. So little accustomed to sin, they will begin to forget that they are in any danger of it. They will imagine that they have arrived at a point in the progress of moral excellence, from which it is impossible that any retrograde movement can take place.. The folly of all rebellion against God will appear in so clear a light, that they will be ready to think it impossible that any rational creature can ever more be guilty of it. They will look upon the pre-

sent state of Christianity with a feeling very similar to that with which we look upon the absurdities of heathenism, wondering how beings endued with reason, could ever be misled by the delusions to which we are so commonly yielding, or could consider themselves Christians at all. And, thinking it impossible that ever Christianity can be reduced to so low a standard again, as it is among us ; and forgetting that they are naturally as weak and as corrupt as we are, and that their strength is not in themselves, they will less earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit. He, provoked, will withdraw ; and then cometh, in their apostacy, the fearful demonstration, that men never can be exalted to a pitch of moral excellence and spiritual power, where they may be safely left to their own unaided powers, to increase, or even to retain what they have acquired. When the Spirit has withdrawn, and Satan is again let loose, then will it be seen that even all the glory of Millennial excellence will not prevent man from being carried by the corrupt tendencies of his heart, into a state of bondage to error and guilt. And then cometh the end, when the rational family of God have no more to learn from the wanderings of their prodigal brother.

These considerations appear to me very satisfactorily to shew that the Incarnation could not take place, either immediately after the beginning, or immediately before the end of the world. Had our Lord come in the flesh at an early period of the world, the history of Christianity would have been

the same. There must first have been a long, a very partially successful struggle, in order to prove, what we feel it so very difficult to admit, that the Gospel makes not its way to our hearts, because we so clearly see, and so readily yield to its excellence ; but solely by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Then would have followed its universal triumph, in order to shew, that however incapable of making way by its own intrinsic excellence, yet when he chose to put forth his power, all the guilt and all the power of the world, could offer it no effectual opposition. And then would have come the apostacy, in order to shew, that there is no point in the progress of spiritual attainment, at which man, unless sustained by an Almighty arm, and borne onward by an Almighty power, would not rapidly recede into a state of guilt and of suffering. In this case the world would long since have reached its termination : but while what is properly called the Christian dispensation, would have afforded the same instruction, at whatever period it had taken place, yet some important links in the chain of man's history, and some important points in the instruction afforded by it, would have been wanting. Let us acknowledge then the wisdom of all the divine arrangements, and admit that for these reasons, and probably too for other reasons, which we cannot see, it was necessary that our Lord should delay his coming till the period when it actually took place.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note B. Appendix.

Having thus disposed of the preliminary question, we may now proceed to consider the circumstances of the Incarnation itself. These are stated with much simplicity in Scripture ; and the discussions into which it will afterwards be necessary to enter, will enable us to be very general in our remarks here. The first inquiry to which our attention is here called is, who was it that became incarnate ? To this the reply is, that it was the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Reasons why the Son alone could become incarnate, are drawn from considerations on the Trinity, which cannot well be introduced here, as they would lead us too far from the present subject. But there is one reason which, though far from the most satisfactory, is yet so very simple and intelligible, that I shall content myself with stating it. Had the Father become incarnate, then, being the Father by nature, and becoming a Son by incarnation, he would have been both Father and Son, which would have been altogether incongruous ; and there would moreover have been two Sons in the Trinity. For a like reason the Holy Ghost would not become incarnate, for then, becoming a Son by incarnation, he would have been both Son and Holy Ghost ; and in this case too, there would have been two Sons in the Trinity. Hence to become incarnate was suitable to the Son alone.

We may now go on to consider how the act of the Incarnation proceeded ; and in doing so, we must simply take the Evangelist for our guide, who thus

describes it. “ And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.”<sup>1</sup> Here we are told that when the Son assumed our nature, “ he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Now when, in assuming our nature, he consented to be conceived and born of a woman, that which he took into indissoluble union with his person, was a true body and a reasonable soul. The reality of his body is proved by the same circumstances that prove the reality of our own. He hungered and thirsted, he was weary and slept, he was born and grew, he sweated and bled, he died and was buried ; all which things are proper to a real body, and prove that his body was no phantom, but truly flesh and blood. That he took also a reasonable soul, admits of equally easy proof. For he grew in wisdom ; he felt grief and sorrow and sore amazement, which neither his body nor his Divinity could feel ; he had a will also distinct from his Divine will ; and he died, which he could not have done had he not had a soul ; for death consists in the separation of the soul from the body. Neither his soul nor his body could ever be for one moment separated from his Divinity, but they were separated from each other, which consti-

<sup>1</sup> See note C. Appendix.



tutes death. Thus it is clear that he took a true body and a reasonable soul, that is, every thing that is essential to full and complete manhood.

There are two questions however, one with regard to our Lord's body, and another with regard to his soul, which require some attention. As to his body, we must inquire whether it was really formed of, and nourished by, the substance of his mother, as the bodies of all other men are; or whether it was derived from some other source, and merely passed through her as a canal of conveyance. Did he derive from her, all that every other man derives from a mother? Was he, in short, her son in reality, or in appearance only? Such questions were often, of necessity, treated of by the primitive writers. But after being so amply discussed by them, we might certainly have hoped to be spared the mortification of being compelled to return to the discussion, amidst the grey hairs of the world's old age. Indeed I hope that the discussion is in reality totally unnecessary. It has, however, been loudly proclaimed, that the heresy which denies that Christ has come in the flesh, has widely overspread the land, and has deeply infected the Church. That this charge has been most grossly exaggerated, I well know. That it is totally groundless I am willing to believe, but have no right to assume. I shall not however enter on the discussion, but shall merely state the grounds upon which it may be most decisively proved, that Christ was truly the Son of Mary,—that the contagion of

the fall excepted, she imparted to her Son all that other mothers impart to their children,—grounds which may be insisted upon by those who feel more disposed to enter upon the discussion than I do ; or who have more ample means than I have, of knowing that the discussion is at all necessary. That Christ was truly the son of Mary, and took his flesh of her substance, is a most important point of Christian doctrine, and may be proved by the following arguments.—If he took not a body of the substance of his mother, then was his whole life one continued scene of deception. Not only did Mary call him her son, but he called her his mother,—he was subject unto her, and on the cross he manifested his filial duty to her by providing for her a home in the house of the beloved disciple. Now if Mary was not as truly his mother, as any other woman is the mother of her child, his recognizing her as his mother, from the beginning to the end of his life, was in reality a deception. And, as Tertullian most justly remarks, if the Marcionites considered it as a degradation of the eternal Word, to suppose that he would submit to be born of woman, it is surely a much greater degradation of him to suppose that he would profess to be her son, while in reality he was not. He would much rather be the son of Mary in reality, than falsely pretend to be so. Again, if he took not flesh of Mary, then is he no brother, no kinsman of ours, and his right of redemption altogether fails. In this case, he not only is not David's

son, but he is not the son of man at all, as he almost uniformly calls himself,—deceptively it must be admitted, unless Mary was truly his mother. Neither in this case could we with any truth be said to be “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” if in reality his body was a different substance, and derived from a different source from ours. Moreover he could not call us “brethren,” any more than we can apply that appellation to the angels that surround the throne of God, or to the worm that creepeth in the dust. Fellow-creatures they are, but, without an entire community of nature, our “brethren” they are not. And when we are required to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” we are required to do what is not merely a moral, but a physical impossibility, if there lie between us and him, the utterly impassable barrier of a different nature. If he took not his fleshly substance of the flesh of his mother, then not being as truly man as we are, he could not fairly meet and conquer our oppressor, or at least his victory can give no assurance of victory to us. For, to express a very common sentiment in the language of Irenæus, ‘Had he not been man who conquered our enemy, he would not have been fairly conquered; and on the other hand, had he not been God who gave us the victory, we could hold it upon no secure tenure.’<sup>1</sup> And finally, if he took not flesh of the

<sup>1</sup> Si enim homo non vicisset inimicum hominis, non juste victus esset inimicus. Rursus autem nisi Deus donasset salutem, non firmiter haberemus eam. *Lib. 1, Cap. 36.*

substance of Mary, then was he not truly the “woman’s seed,” and the great original promise, upon which all subsequent promises are built, remains as yet unfulfilled. But it is not more essential that the serpent’s head should be bruised at all, than it is that it should be bruised by the “woman’s seed.” Hence if Christ was not truly and really the “woman’s seed,” then the whole foundation of our hopes fails. Upon these grounds we not only hold it most important to believe, but consider it to be most irrefragably proved, that Christ was as truly “made of a woman” as we are,—that his body was truly a body composed of flesh and blood, as ours is.

The question with regard to his soul, to which I referred above, is,—Did he take a reasonable soul? A distinction was made, in early times, between the reasonable soul, and the sensitive soul or vital principle; and not a few heretics maintained that our Saviour took the latter, but not the former; that in him the divinity supplied the place of a reasonable soul. This distinction, I observe, has been abolished by some of the most celebrated modern physiologists, who confound the reasonable soul with the vital principle. The distinction however, I apprehend, rests upon the most undeniable grounds, and in this respect, the ancient heretic has the advantage over the modern physiologist. With this however, I have nothing to do; but, while it is certain that he assumed the vital principle, the question is, Did he also assume the reasonable soul of man? I surely

cannot be called upon to waste any time in the discussion of such a question : for if there be few, if any, who deny the reality of our Lord's body, there are, I should think, still fewer, who are so utterly ignorant of the Gospel, as to deny that he took a reasonable soul ; and to maintain that, in him, the divinity occupied the place of the soul. Should any discussion be, by any, found necessary, they will find that every argument which proves that he had a soul at all, proves it to have been a reasonable soul. Our belief therefore is, not simply that the Word, in being made flesh, took a body and soul, but, as our catechism, with guarded accuracy of expression, hath taught us from our childhood, that he took "a true body, and a reasonable soul."

That our Lord really had a reasonable soul, seems to be sufficiently proved by the fact, that he was made man : for this would not be true if he had only a human body ; because a human body is not a man, but only part of a man. The argument commonly urged by the fathers, against the Apollinarians, seems also to be perfectly decisive. They maintained that there was the same reason for his taking a soul, as for his taking a body ; for the soul had sinned and needed redemption as well as the body. Thus one of them, urging that if that which is inferior in man was assumed that it might be sanctified by the Incarnation, for the same reason must that which is superior in man have been assumed, says, " If the clay was leavened and became a new mass, Oh, ye



wise ones, shall not the image be leavened and mingled with God, being deified by the divinity ? ” <sup>1</sup>

But this view of our Lord's humanity seems to bind us down to the adoption of the tenet, that it was fallen, sinful humanity. For it is acknowledged, that his mother was a fallen, sinful woman. If then his body was formed of her substance, then must it, of necessity, have been fallen and sinful. This however, by no means follows : for, in the *first* place, it is not the body of man that is fallen, nor the soul of man, but the whole man, consisting of both. His body therefore, might be taken of the substance of his mother, as it most certainly was, without involving any necessity that he should be a fallen man. *Next*, his body being formed of the substance of his mother, no more infers that body to have been *in all respects*, the same as hers, than the formation of the world out of chaos, infers the world to be a confused and indigested mass ; or than the creation of matter out of nothing, infers matter to be, as many ancient, and some modern philosophers, have determined it to be, nothing, or the formation of Adam's body

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ δὲ πῆλος ἐζυμώθη καὶ νεὸν φυράμα γεγονέν ὡ σοφοί, ἧ εἰκὼν οὐ ζυμώθησεται, καὶ πρὸς Θεὸν ἀνακραθήσεται. *Πατριάρχης Γρηγόριος ὁ Ναζιανζηνός* ; Gregory Nazianzen. Sermon 51. In a preceding part of the same Sermon, he observes that “ both became one by the *mixture*, God being made man, and man being made God, or however any one may choose to express it.”—Τὰ γὰρ ἀμφοτέρω ἐν ἑνὶ συγκρασεῖ, θεοῦ μὲν ἐνανθρώπησαντος, ἀνθρώπου δὲ θεογενέος, ἡ ὁπωσάντις ὀνομασεῖε. This language, if rigidly interpreted, would lead to error, as there could be no *mingling* of the divinity and humanity, but to an error in direct opposition to that which maintains the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity.

from the dust, infers it to have been an inanimate clod. *Again*, the contagion of the fall, and the guilt of Adam's first sin, can be propagated in no other way that we know of, than by ordinary generation. But our Lord Jesus Christ descending from Adam in a way altogether singular and extraordinary, was not at all involved in the guilt of his sin, nor tainted by the contagion of the fall. But upon this subject I shall avail myself of the language of Augustine which is both more appropriate than any that I could use, and will carry more weight with it. Speaking of the Incarnation, he says, "The Word which was made flesh, was in the beginning, and was God with God. But however his participation of our humiliation, that we might partake of his exaltation, held a certain middle course, even in the nativity of his flesh ; so that we should be born in sinful flesh, but he in the likeness of sinful flesh ; that we should be born not only of flesh and blood, but also of the will of man, and of the will of the flesh ; but he only of flesh and blood, and not of the will of man, or of the will of the flesh, but of God. We therefore are born unto death, on account of sin ; but he, on account of us, was born unto death without sin. And as his humiliation in which he descended to us, was not, in all respects, equalled to our humiliation in which he here found us ; even so our exaltation, in which we ascend to him, will not be equalled to his exaltation, in which we shall there find him. We shall be made sons of God, by his grace ; but he was always by

nature the son of God. We, when converted, shall be united to God as inferiors; he, never needing conversion, remains equal with God. We are made partakers of eternal life; he is eternal life. He alone therefore, even when made man, still remaining God, never had any sin, nor took sinful flesh, though he took it of the sinful flesh of his mother. For what flesh he took of her, that truly he either purified that it might be assumed, or he purified it in the assumption. Wherefore he created whom he might choose, and chose, from whom he might be created, a virgin mother, not conceiving by the law of sinful flesh, that is, by the motion of carnal concupiscence, but by a pious faith deserving to have the holy seed formed in her. How much more then ought sinful flesh to be baptized, in order to escape condemnation, if that flesh which had no sin, was baptized as an example for our imitation? ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Verbum enim quod caro factum est, in principio erat, et apud Deum Deus erat. Veruntamen ipsa participatio illius in inferiora nostra, ut nostra esset in superiora illius, tenuit quandam et in carnis nativitate medietatem: ut nos quidem nati essemus in carne peccati, ille autem in similitudine carnis peccati: nos non solum ex carne et sanguine, verum etiam ex voluntate viri et ex voluntate carnis, ille autem tantum ex carne et sanguine, non ex voluntate viri, neque ex voluntate carnis, sed ex Deo natus est. Et ideo nos in mortem propter peccatum, ille propter nos in mortem sine peccato. Sicut autem inferiora ejus, quibus ad nos descendit, non omni modo coæquata sunt inferioribus nostris, in quibus nos hic invenit: sic et superiora nostra, quibus ad eum adscendimus, non coæquabuntur superioribus ejus, in quibus eum illic inventuri sumus. Nos enim ipsius gratia facti erimus filii Dei, ille semper natura erat filius Dei: nos aliquando conversi adhærebimus impares Deo, ille nunquam aversus manet æqualis Deo: nos participes vitæ æternæ, ille vita æterna. Solus ergo ille etiam homo factus

What Augustine has written to shew, that as the flesh of Christ proceeded not from carnal concupiscence, there was no such concupiscence in him ; and that he consequently had a perfect holiness, resulting not from the successful repression of all the motions of sin in the flesh, but from the total absence of any such motions, would fill a larger volume than I have any intention to write. One passage more however I shall here quote. ‘ For he who lusteth after evil things, although, resisting his concupiscence, he perpetrate not the evil, fulfils what is written, “ Thou shalt not go after thy lusts ; ” yet he does not fulfil what the law saith, “ Thou shalt not covet.” Christ therefore who most perfectly fulfilled the law, had no evil concupiscence ; because that discord between the flesh and the spirit, which works in the nature of men from the sin of the first man, he was altogether free from, who was born of the Spirit and a virgin, and not by the concupiscence of the flesh. But in us the flesh lusteth after evil against the spirit, so that it will perform the evil, unless the spirit so lust against the flesh, as to overcome it. You say that the mind of Christ

manens Deus, peccatum nullum habuit umquam, nec sumsit carnem peccati, quamvis de materna carne peccati. Quod enim carnis inde suscepit, id profecto aut suscipiendum mundavit, aut suscipiendo mundavit. Ideo virginem matrem, non lege carnis peccati, id est, non concupiscentiæ carnalis motu concipientem, sed pia fide sanctum germen in se fieri promerentem, quam eligeret creavit, de qua crearetur elegit. Quanto magis ergo caro peccati baptizanda est propter evadendum judicium, si baptizata est caro sine peccato propter imitationis exemplum? *De peccatorum meritis et remissione, Lib. 2, Cap. 24.*

subdued all his senses ; but that needs to be subdued which offers resistance. Now the flesh of Christ had nothing unsubdued, nor did it in any thing resist the Spirit, so as to require to be subdued by it.”<sup>1</sup>

The considerations suggested by Augustine will, I think, satisfy the reader that the flesh of Christ, from the peculiar mode of its generation, was not at all fallen and sinful, like the flesh of all other men. The strong language in which he addresses Julian,—and we shall by and by see that this language is moderate to that which he occasionally applies to him on the same subject,—shews both how very fully he was convinced himself, that the flesh of Christ was not fallen nor sinful, and also how very warmly he felt upon this subject.

But *farther*, while the generation of the flesh of Christ, in a manner so very different from that in which all other flesh is generated, necessarily leads

<sup>1</sup> Nam qui concupiscit mala, etsi resistens concupiscentiæ suæ non ea perpetrât, implet quidem quod scriptum est, post concupiscentias tuas non eas : sed non implet quod ait lex, non concupisces. Christus ergo qui legem perfectissime implevit, nulla illicita concupivit ; quia discordiam carnis et spiritus, quæ in hominum naturam ex prævaricatione primi hominis vertit, prorsus ille non habuit, qui de Spiritu et virgine non per concupiscentiam carnis est natus. In nobis autem caro concupiscit contra spiritum illicita, ita ut omnino perficiat, nisi et contra carnem spiritus ita concupiscat, ut vincat. Dicis mentem Christi omnium sensuum domitricem : sed hoc domandum est, resistit : caro autem Christi nihil habebat in domitum, nec in aliquo spiritui resistebat, ut ab illo eam domari oporteret. *Operis imperfecti contra Julianum*, Lib. iv. cap. 57.

In the following page, he charges Julian with outrageous blasphemy in equalling the flesh of Christ to the flesh of other men. Immaniter, Juliane, blasphemâs, cœquans carnem Christi ceterorum hominum carni ; nec videns illum venisse non in carne peccati, sed in similitudine carnis peccati.



to the conclusion that, in some respects, it was different from other flesh ; and that as it was generated without any of that concupiscence which enters into the generation of all other flesh, the total absence of all concupiscence from his flesh, is the very point in which the difference consists ; it will be recollected that his flesh was generated by the immediate act of the Holy Ghost, and therefore that if that which was generated was fallen and sinful, then the Holy Ghost was the doer of this sinful act, the generator of this sinful thing. Now without stopping at present to shew that this is nothing but an aggravated form of manichœism, I would remark that it is in direct opposition to the very letter of the text, which declares that what was generated, was a “ holy thing.” Now what was generated was the humanity of our Lord ; which is not called a person, which it was not, but a thing. And the declaration refers not to what would be the future character of that humanity, as founded upon the acts of our Lord’s life, but to his character AS GENERATED. And when the Evangelist declares, in language as express and unequivocal as can be used, that he was generated *holy*, the man who maintains, in direct opposition to this, that he was generated *fallen and sinful*,—that he needed, or that he was capable of REGENERATION, maintains a tenet to which, we can be deemed chargeable with no severity, when we apply the language addressed by Augustine to Julian, who, as I shall afterwards have occasion to shew, was guilty of no such impiety.

Besides, if he needed *regeneration*, where was he to find it? The Holy Ghost is the regenerator. Where he works, all is purity. But if he, in the first instance, generated him fallen and sinful, – and perhaps I ought to apologize even for so impious a supposition, —then I cannot conceive either why he should, or how he could, afterwards correct the defect of his own work. That he was generated holy, the text expressly declares; but if he were not, I would ask upon what principle he could be regenerated? or what purpose could that regeneration possibly answer? If in his generation the Holy Ghost failed to generate him holy, he failed either through lack of power, or through lack of will. If he failed through lack of power,—supposing this to be possible—then he could not afterwards regenerate him, as he could assuredly bring no additional power to the work. And if he failed through lack of will, then he, by his own immediate act, chose to produce a being who not only was capable of, but who actually needed, and received regeneration.

Moreover the generation of Christ was miraculous. It indeed did so far surpass all miracles, being the very event for which all the previous arrangements of the world were made, that it is perhaps by an accommodation of language only, that it can be called a miracle at all. But a miracle surely could not be wrought by God, without having some beneficial result in view; and a result which could not be produced by any other means. But if the flesh of Christ

was fallen and sinful, then was a miracle wrought to produce that which would have been, with unerring certainty, produced without it. And if it be a point of faith of vital importance to believe, that the flesh of Christ was fallen sinful flesh, then did God work a miracle which was not only useless, as the result would have been better produced without it, but directly pernicious. For it is plain that the miraculous conception naturally leads us to suppose that the flesh of Christ was not fallen and sinful, and thus throws a great degree of doubt and distrust over a transaction, with regard to which, had the miracle been spared us, no doubt whatever could possibly have existed.

Upon the whole, the verse in which the angel announces the incarnation, does so very clearly shew, that the flesh of Christ did differ from the flesh of other men, and shews also so distinctly in what that difference consists, namely, in that it was generated holy, as no other flesh ever was, and consequently never needed, nor was ever susceptible of regeneration, that had I no other object in view than to prove this, I should not deem it necessary to write another line upon the subject. But a particular view of the work which Christ did in the flesh, besides affording abundant proofs that he was not fallen and sinful, will also lead us to considerations which possess an interest and an usefulness altogether independent of this point,—a point however, let it not be forgotten, than which not one of more vital importance is to be

found within the whole range of Christian theology. I shall therefore proceed to take a view of the different offices which Christ executes as our Redeemer ; and we shall then be able to determine whether these are offices which could be sustained by a fallen sinful man. It is perhaps a matter of little consequence, to which of these offices we first direct our attention. In the application of the benefits of his offices to us, his sacerdotal office takes the precedence. We cannot be enlightened by him as our Prophet, nor renovated by him as our King, nor can any act of grace be exercised toward us, till we be pardoned by him as our Priest. Justification is the first step in the progress of the sinner's salvation. Till this be granted to him, no grace and no virtue can be conferred upon him. Did he possess any Christian grace, previous to his justification, there might be some ground for supposing that his justification was founded upon his possession of these graces, and was the effect instead of the cause of them. When a king exalts to high rank, and employs in important offices, a man who was formerly in a state of rebellion against him, it is evident that the guilt of the rebellion must first have been forgiven. In the same way when a man is possessed of any Christian grace, we know that he could receive it from Christ alone ; and that his possession of it is a proof that his sins have been all forgiven. The sacerdotal office of Christ, therefore, is the office the benefits of which are first applied to us. Perhaps, however, it may be more natural to

consider his offices, in the order of our perception of their application, and thus to begin with his prophetic office. For we must be enlightened by him as our Prophet, before we can see our need of being pardoned by him as our Priest, or sanctified by him as our King.



## CHAPTER II.

### CHRIST OUR PROPHET.

It has been already observed that Christ was Prophet, Priest, and King from the beginning. This is abundantly certain from the fact that Abel and other patriarchs were saved, that is, they were pardoned, enlightened and sanctified. But this they could not be, excepting by the Mediator in the exercise of all his offices. There were many prophets before the incarnation of our Lord ; but if ever there was a true prophet who did not derive his commission from him alone, then so far his work of mediation ceased, and our salvation was wrought out by another. But if there never was any other Saviour than Christ, then there never was any other prophet than he ; and the prophets that preceded his coming were merely his delegates, commissioned by him, and totally unable either to abridge or to enlarge the message given to them.

The duty of Christ as our Prophet is to reveal to us the Father, as he saith, “ Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever

the Son will reveal him," and again it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Now how did Christ reveal to us the Father? Not by any set proofs of his existence, nor by any abstract discussions upon his nature or character, nor by didactic discourses, but by action; a mode of instruction as level to the comprehension of the meanest capacity, as to that of the loftiest; as intelligible to the peasant as to the philosopher. He taught us, for example, that God is Holy. But how did he do this? Not by any set dissertations on his holiness, but by the unceasing and spotless holiness of his own conduct. Never were allurements more enticing than those by which he was sometimes solicited, and never were trials so severe as those to which he was commonly exposed, and never were testimonies so numerous, unequivocal and decisive, as those by which it is proved that by no allurement was he ever enticed, by no trial was he ever pressed into a deviation, or into any thing approaching a wish to deviate, from the path of duty. Not only could he himself challenge his bitterest foes to convince him of sin, but the testimony of his friends and foes alike concurs to assure us that he "did no sin," and that in his mouth no guile was found. In the same manner he teaches us that God is good, not by regular proofs of this in his discourses, but by the constant exhibition of it in his practice. When the infirm and the distressed applied to him, the application

was never made in vain. He never said to the applicant, you are of too abandoned a character for notice, and richly deserve all the miseries that you endure ; or, your disease is of too desperate a nature, or of too long standing to admit of relief. No, but his language was, “ If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” And while he was literally fulfilling the prediction which thus spoke of the blessings of his coming,—“ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped ; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing ;” he was, in so doing, giving proof of his power and his readiness, to give a far higher accomplishment to this happy prediction, by healing the spiritual diseases, of which those of the body are only feeble, however painful symptoms. And when he went about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases, we are expressly taught that the design of his so doing, was to lead men to apply to him for blessings of a higher order, and to convince them of his power and his readiness to confer these blessings. Thus when the scribes murmured at hearing him say to the man who was sick of the palsy, “ Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee,” he asked them, “ Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and walk ? ” very plainly intimating that he who had the power and the will to do the one, had no less the power and the will to do the other, a truth which he proceeded still

more directly to teach, saying,—“ But *that ye may know* that the Son of man hath power on earth *to forgive sins*, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.” Here ability to command the sick man to arise and walk, is, by our Lord himself, adduced as a convincing proof of his power to forgive sin. Indeed as disease is just the effect of sin, nothing can well be clearer than that he who can, by the word of authority, heal the one, can also forgive the other.

Now he who exhibited this unceasing holiness, and this unlimited goodness, was God with us, God manifest in the flesh. And such as he was in the world, even such is God. If we wish to know the character of God, we shall find it revealed there, where the life of Jesus is recorded. Hence the following most distinct language is used by our Lord himself on this subject: “ If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” Philip saith unto him, “ Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?” Hence, too, when we are called upon to combat the fears that take possession of the awakened soul, and the arguments which ignorance and unbelief raise up, in the heart of the convinced sinner,

against faith and hope, we find the record of our Saviour's life, one of the best and most efficient grounds, on which they may be combatted. We say with powerful effect to the sinner, under these circumstances, He, whose goodness was so unlimited, was God manifested in the flesh, and manifested there for this very purpose, that we might see with our own eyes, and have the most perfect knowledge of the gracious dispositions of God toward us. If you say that you admit the general proposition, that there is mercy with God for sinners, but dare not specifically apply the general proposition to your own individual case, and hope that there is mercy for *you*, then we say that you are negating not only his manifold and gracious declarations, whereby he encourages the weary and heavy laden to come to him, that they may find peace and rest; but you are negating the import of the lesson taught by the whole course of his conduct. For, from that exercise of inconceivable goodness which he manifested when, leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the world began, he condescended to become obnoxious to every suffering which human nature knows, in that flesh which he took into personal union with himself, down to that other equally inconceivable exercise of goodness which he manifested when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, giving his own life for that of a lost world, what one act in the whole course of his earthly existence is not in most perfect accordance with the grace and the goodness,



which distinguished alike its commencement and its close? What wretch ever applied to him, and was sent away unrelieved? Whom did he ever ask, by what right, or on the ground of what merit, they laid claim to his interposition in their favour? Whom did he ever reproach with the guilt that had brought their miseries upon them? If he healed the sick, and raised the dead, if out of one he cast seven devils, and dispossessed another of a whole legion, it was for the very purpose of convincing you, that there is no limit either to his power or his willingness to heal your spiritual sickness, to quicken you from your death in sin. You have the same access to him now, that the miserable had when he was on earth. What he was then, he is now. He asks no questions as to the past. He asks not if you be laden with the sins of a few days, or with the sins of many years. He asks not if your crimes be few or many, slight or aggravated. They all lie equally within the compass of his power; and his only question is, “Wilt thou be made whole?” If, for a moment he refused the woman of Syrophenicia, it was only to teach you the happy effect of persevering and importunate prayer. If he refused her for a moment, it was only the more emphatically to teach this truth, that he will never refuse,—that *whosoever* cometh unto him shall not be denied.

And if the life of Christ was in reality a living manifestation of all the perfections of God, and if we know God, because God has verily dwelt in the flesh amongst

us, then it is obvious, not merely that the Son, who became our Prophet, to reveal unto us the Father, must of necessity become flesh, since in no other way that we know could he make that revelation ; but it is not less obviously necessary, that the flesh which he took should be perfectly holy, else it is not conceivable how his life could afford us any exhibition of the holiness of God. [He might have shewed to us the holiness of a man, such as Abraham or Moses, carried to a higher degree of perfection, even to the extent of avoiding all actual transgression of the law of God. But if his flesh was really sinful, if it ever felt the slightest propensity or inclination to sin,—an inclination which required to be repressed, in order to prevent it from proceeding to actual guilt, then this propensity was itself criminal,—it was just that carnal concupiscence, that lusting of the flesh against the spirit, which we derive from the fall, and which effectually disqualified him in whom it dwelt, from giving any practical revelation of the divine holiness in his life. He was exactly in the situation of other fallen men ; he might be a very bright monument of divine grace ; but the revealer of God,—the author of the grace of illumination, he could no more be, than any other fallen and regenerated man. Of that grace he might have received a richer abundance than any other fallen man ever received ; but he stood in exactly the same predicament as they did, and therefore, though perhaps we cannot reasonably hope to receive quite as large a measure of that wisdom which

maketh wise unto salvation, from Abraham “ the friend of God,” or from Aaron, the “ Saint of the Lord,” or from Paul “ the apostle of the Gentiles,” as from him in whom the work of regeneration had a more perfect operation than it had in them ; yet assuredly the same principle that authorizes us to expect that grace from one fallen and regenerated man, authorizes us to expect the same grace, though perhaps in a somewhat inferior degree, from any other fallen and regenerated man. And this is not the only point on which the doctrine of our Lord’s fallen humanity, gives the most direct and decisive sanction to the worship of the Saints : the sanction becomes still stronger and more decisive, when we reflect, that though we may probably expect a more abundant measure of wisdom from Christ, than from any other fallen and regenerated man, yet we may unquestionably expect the highest measure of that wisdom, when we seek it both from him, and also from all other fallen and regenerated men. In him indeed, that concupiscence of the flesh, which characterizes fallen man, might be kept as “ a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed,” from which no emanation of actual guilt was ever permitted to proceed. The motions of sin in the flesh might in him be so powerfully and successfully repressed, that it might be truly said of him in whom these motions wrought, that he “ *did* no sin ;” but with what truth it could be said of him, whose whole life was an unceasing, however successful struggle against the

will of the flesh, compelling “the flesh *against* its will,” into however perfect a harmony with the will of God, that he “*knew* no sin,” is to me altogether incomprehensible. If the concupiscence of the flesh existed in him at all, however successfully subdued, it existed as the germ of all actual transgression,—as containing in it the elements of all human guilt,—as the object of just wrath, and deserved punishment,—as that which can be rendered fit for communion with God, only through that shedding of blood, without which there can be no remission, and consequently totally depriving him in whom it existed, of all claim to the title, and of all power to accomplish the purposes, of a “Lamb without blemish, and without spot.”

But in order to see all the fullness with which he discharged the duties resulting from his prophetic character, and learn from his discharge of them all the knowledge which it is fitted and intended to convey, we must look, not merely to his life, but still more especially to his death. He was a prophet on the cross, as well as “a priest on the throne,” and not the less a King on both. And whatever knowledge of the character of God, we derive from the life of Christ, is both carried out to a greater extent, and taught with a more impressive emphasis, by his death. By his life we are taught that God is good, and the sinner is powerfully encouraged to come to him for pardon and for peace. But it was on the cross that he gave the highest exhibition of the Divine

goodness. To all his creatures, the goodness of God was known ; but to none of them was the infinite and inconceivable extent of that goodness known, till Christ died on the cross. When man fell, had God freely forgiven the rebel, and by a word restored him to perfect purity, and placed him in a state of impeccable stability, this would have been an act of unexampled goodness. Still however the goodness which forgave the rebel, supposing it possible to forgive him by a mere act of grace, might very possibly not be infinite. As such an act however, could by no possibility be performed, without throwing doubt on all the Divine perfections, and producing the most disastrous consequences throughout the universe, the next and only method which created wisdom could have suggested, for the treatment of the rebels, would be, to give up the fallen pair to him to whose suggestions they had listened, in opposition to the command of God ; to cut off the stream of iniquity by drying up its source, and people the world anew with less feeble creatures. This also however, would have left an indelible reflection on the wisdom and the power of God, for having made at all, creatures whom he found it necessary to dispose of in such a manner. But when they heard of the Incarnation, when they heard that the Eternal Word, who spoke the world into being, was himself to be made flesh, and in the weakness of flesh was to go forth into that world of which Satan had become the god, and to meet him in his own domain, and to contend with



him and all his powers on his own ground, and by his own deeds and his own sufferings, to take away the captives of the mighty, and to redeem the prey of the terrible,—and when they saw all this actually accomplished, then had they a view of the goodness of God, far beyond aught that they could possibly have had before. When they saw God willing to redeem from their captivity, and to ransom from destruction, creatures whose utter and final perdition could not have affected, in the slightest degree, his happiness or glory, with no less a price than the blood of his own well-beloved Son, it is no matter of surprize that they, delighted to be thus assured, not only that God is good, but that his goodness is absolutely infinite, should, as well as the redeemed from among men, celebrate the death of Christ, in the most exalted strains of gratitude and adoration, as we are assured by John in the Revelation, that they do, when he says, “ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of *many angels* round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And *every creature* which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth

upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.”<sup>1</sup> And well might the same writer, when contemplating the goodness of God, as it is set forth in the unspeakable value of the price by which he purchased our safety, thus speak of it, “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”<sup>2</sup> The love of God is indeed thus manifested to be something, the extent of which no language may describe, and no heart may conceive: and the redeemed of the Lord, while throughout eternity his love flows forth to them, in an ever-increasing weight of glory and blessedness, will feel no misgivings, lest he who thus blesseth them, should grow weary in the exercise of his love, and should come to a limit beyond which they shall not go in its enjoyment, for they can ever look back to the cross of Christ, where the death of our Prophet gave an ineffaceable and irrefragable demonstration that the love of God is truly boundless, and exhaustless, and passing all understanding.

Now is it possible that the life of Christ, clear, and distinct, and decisive as are the manifestations of the love and goodness of God which it affords, could have manifested that love and goodness to as great an extent, or have given so impressive and indubitable a demonstration of them, as that which we derive

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 9.

from his death? Every reader will readily answer, No. It was through his whole life, but still more especially and emphatically in his death, that our great Prophet revealed unto us the Father. Then it follows that he died as a Prophet, not less than as a Priest; or, in other words, it was from his death as a sacrifice to expiate our sins, that we derive the highest instruction, which, as our Prophet, he came to teach us. Had God sent his Son merely to instruct us by his doctrine, this would have been a great proof of love; but it might still have been supposed that that love was limited, that though he gave him to be our instructor, yet he would not give him up to suffering for our sakes. But when Christ actually died, then was the love of God proved to be truly infinite, "For greater love hath no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends." But Christ had greater love than this, for he laid down his life even for strangers and enemies. But what mighty proof of love was this, if Christ was really a fallen sinful man? In that case his death could be of no avail to us, and could afford us no proof that the love of God is infinite. But it was essentially necessary on his own account, for if he were fallen, he needed regeneration, having been generated by the Holy Ghost, a sinful thing; and regeneration can be perfected only through the medium of death.<sup>1</sup> And if he died to perfect his

<sup>1</sup> This position will be disputed by those who have adopted the Pelagian tenet, that sinless perfection is attainable in this life. To me the fact appears

own regeneration, then his death is no more to us, than the death of any other fallen, sinful, but regenerated man; nor can I see how the love of God toward us is displayed in the one case, more than in the other.

But supposing that the death of Christ was not at all necessary, on his own account, but was endured solely for our sakes, then the demonstration of the love of God which it affords, becomes much more distinct and impressive, when viewed in connection with that demonstration of the exceedingly hateful and malignant nature of sin, which was given by the same event. If the evil of sin be small, then the love that forgives it is not great, and therefore the death of Christ would not be a proof of the infinite love of God, unless it were also a proof of the infinite evil of sin. That the evil of sin is infinite is easily proved by abstract reasoning; for its direct tendency is to dethrone God, and thus destroy the universe. But God does not teach us truths of importance, by abstract reasonings which require close thinking to apprehend, but by practical demonstrations which are alike intelligible to all. And the death of Christ is the practical illustration, not only

just as little liable to dispute, as any other fact that falls under our daily observation. While we are in the flesh, the flesh will lust against the spirit; and the concupiscence of the flesh is sin. I cannot be expected however, in prosecuting one controversy, to plunge myself into another. They who wish to enter upon the question, will find it amply and ably discussed by Augustine, in his writings against the Pelagians, especially in his treatises—*De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, *De libera et spiritu*, and *De perfectione justitiæ hominis*.

that sin is evil, but that its evil is infinite. When sin was first introduced into the dominions of God, some demonstration of its evil was given, in the punishment inflicted on the offenders. That demonstration, however, was comparatively trifling. In them it was not immediately punished to the full extent of its demerit, nor consequently, to the full extent of its evil shewn. And had these first offenders been at once and freely forgiven, could this by any possibility have been done, it would have afforded a comparatively trifling manifestation of the grace of God. Before that grace could be seen in all its glory, sin must first be seen in all its malignity. And this could not be seen merely in the fall of angels. One of its most awful characteristics, their fall could not shew. I refer to its generative nature,—its capability of being propagated from race to race through successive generations. Whatever number of angels there were who kept not their first state, each fell by his own personal act; and to however many other sins, that first sin might give rise in the individual, this was only a proof that sin once admitted into the heart would propagate itself there; but could give no idea of another fact, which far more fearfully demonstrates the malignity of sin,—namely, that sin might be committed under such circumstances, as would render it just in God to cause the poison of that sin to pass from the actual transgressor, to unnumbered millions of other responsible creatures, connected in a particular manner with the transgressor, so as to involve



them all in his guilt and in his doom. Till man fell, and the result of his fall was seen, it could not be known that such was the malignity of sin, that one sin of one man, was sufficient to diffuse guilt and misery through all generations of men. One sin thus committed, under circumstances which afforded it an opportunity for producing all its natural and proper effects, gave a much more impressive view of its native malignity, than the fall of angels could possibly do. Many proofs of the hatefulness of sin have been given, such as the sweeping away of a guilty world by the flood,—the sudden destruction of “the cities of the plain,”—the devotion of the Amorites to extermination, when the measure of their iniquities was full. And all the madness, and folly, and guilt, and misery, that abound on earth, and every sin, and every sorrow, of every individual, when viewed, as it ought always to be, in connection with the original source whence it sprung, are all affecting and convincing proofs,—proofs coming home to the bosom of every man who is capable of feeling—how evil a thing and bitter sin is ; while, at the same time, they are proving that the “evil figment” of man’s heart, the “root of bitterness,” is at this day as vigorous, and fresh, and flourishing, and fruitful, as it was at the beginning ; and while they are shewing, how one sin of one man, when committed under circumstances favourable to the developement of its proper effects, is capable of resulting in the actual guilt and temporal sufferings of all, and in the final condemnation of many.

And when this demonstration of the malignity of sin has been for ages exhibited to the examination of men and of angels, when we have seen one sin spreading its contamination over a whole world, and over all generations of men, and shewing its poison in the production of a guilt and a misery that baffle all calculation and all conception, is this demonstration, overwhelming though it be, the most painful, and the most awful exhibition, of the “exceeding sinfulness of sin,” which God hath given to angels and to men? No. Notwithstanding this demonstration, the evil of sin, inconceivable as it is shewn to be, might yet have a limit, and its misery might have an end. Therefore a demonstration more striking still, and one which may prove that the evil of sin is truly and properly infinite, was wanted; lest men, ever apt to undervalue that evil, should come to think that the sufferings of life, and the pangs of death, form a sufficient expiation for it. The only begotten Son of God is sent forth, to teach us this, among other things, that the holiness of God is something far beyond all conception,—that his aversion to sin is wholly unalterable,—and that, in short, there is a hatefulness in sin, which we can no more comprehend, than we can comprehend the perfections of God. We have seen the effects of one sin, and these are disastrous beyond all calculation. But the death of our Divine Prophet affords a demonstration even beyond this, else it would not have been given. When angels saw him, whom they were accustomed

to worship, go forth into the world “in the likeness of sinful flesh,”—when they saw him take upon himself the penalty due to the sins of a lost world,—when they saw him undertake to pay a debt of such incalculable magnitude, they would be ready to say, ‘Surely it is sufficient that he has had goodness enough to undertake for these fallen creatures! The debt will not be in reality exacted; the penalty will not be unsparingly inflicted. The sins which could not be forgiven to the creature, will be freely forgiven to the only begotten and well-beloved Son, when he has taken them upon himself. A little may be exacted, in order to prove the reality of his suretyship; a little may be inflicted, in order to prove the reality of his substitution; but surely the whole will never be either required or inflicted. The transgressions of the law, which could not be forgiven to the actually guilty creature, may well be forgiven, when they become, by imputation, the transgressions of him who is above the law. He will spare the Son.’ But no, not one pang due to our guilt was withheld, not one drop of gall which guilt had mingled in our cup, was abstracted from his. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;” and he is able to forgive every sin, because there is no sin, the bitterness resulting from which he did not feel to the full. And this is what constitutes his death so awful, and solemn, and impressive a demonstration, beyond all other demonstrations, of the infinite and inconceivable holiness of God, and of the unspeakable hatefulness

of sin, that though he who took our iniquities upon himself was the well-beloved Son, yet not one pang due to guilt was spared him.

But what becomes of this demonstration, if Christ was fallen and sinful? His death was then no greater a demonstration of the evil of sin, than our own. He took our sins upon him, and in consequence of the imputation of them, even though he was the well-beloved Son, he was not forgiven, but died for them. But if this assumption of our sins was not the sole ground of his death, if he was bound to die on some other ground besides the imputation of our sins, then the doctrine of imputation itself begins to be doubtful; for we have it only declared in words, but not exhibited in clear and unequivocal action: and moreover it is in vain to look to the cross of Christ for the most decisive and impressive proof that was ever given, of the infinite holiness of God, and hatefulness of sin; for he was only in the situation of an infant, which is fallen and sinful, but guiltless of actual transgression. From the death of such an infant, we learn quite as much of the holiness of God, and the evil of sin, as we learn from the cross of Christ, if he was fallen and sinful. Under the sanction of such a principle, it certainly cannot be matter of surprize, if the necessity of an atonement should be denied, and sin should be considered as something sufficiently slight, to be abundantly expiated by our own sufferings and death. But if we reject the tenet that Christ was fallen and sinful, and died because

he was so, then does his cross afford such a fearful proof of the evil of sin, as the universe never saw before, nor can ever see again. And that proof of the sinfulness of sin, involves in it, also, a new and most impressive illustration, of the goodness and grace of God, proving it to be truly infinite. For if such be the hatefulness of sin, that even when the Son took our sins upon him, not one pang due to them was spared him, then we not only say, how great is the goodness of God, in giving up his Son to death for the sake of any creatures, however exalted, and however pure ! but we also say, how inconceivably great is his goodness, in giving up his Son to death for the sake of creatures, so deeply involved in all the pollutions of that abominable thing which God so unalterably hates ! Well might the apostle say, “ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”<sup>1</sup> And well might he also say, as he does in the same chapter, “ Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” For if such be the malignity of sin, that one sin of one man could involve the whole human race in guilt and condemnation,—nay could bring the Son of God to the cross—how great is that grace of God, which forgives, not one sin of one man, but innumerable sins of innumerable men !

Upon this point then, we are irresistibly led to the

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 7.



conclusion, that our Divine Prophet was not fallen or sinful. A demonstration of the same thing might be drawn from a similar course of remarks on the truth and justice of God. It is in the cross of Christ, that we see these perfections operating, under circumstances which prove them to be infinite. But if Christ was fallen and sinful, this proof altogether fails. I shall only farther shew, however, under this head, how the death of Christ proves the Immutability of God, as it is most necessary that we should be well assured of this. Of the existence of this perfection the history of the world affords many striking illustrations. Many things occurred to induce God, if change with him had been possible, to change his purpose of grace and mercy to a fallen world. The history of the antediluvian ages shews us men, not, as might have been expected, mourning over the dismal consequences of the fall, and walking in all the humility of deep penitence before the God whom they had offended, and cherishing with feelings of heartfelt gratitude the happy hopes which he had graciously held out to them ; but, on the contrary, devoted to every species of wickedness, and carrying their guilt to such an extent as to render it necessary to sweep away the whole race. Yet even in the infliction of this terrible judgment, God, in the midst of wrath remembered mercy, and preserved one family, that through them the promise that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head, might be fulfilled, and the immutability of his purpose might be made manifest.

Again, when Israel was chosen, that to that nation might be committed the “oracles of God,” and that they might be placed under a dispensation preparatory to the coming of the promised Messiah, how constantly did they prove themselves to be truly a stiff-necked and rebellious people ! Not all the wonders that they saw in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness,—not their own constant experience of the happiness of obedience, and of the miserable consequences of rebellion,—in short nothing could wean them from their idolatries. How often had God to give them up into the hands of their enemies ! But nothing could induce him to cast them off. Their unbelief could not make his faithfulness of none effect. “I am Jehovah ; I change not ; therefore, the sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Notwithstanding all their provocations, therefore, they were still preserved till the promise was fulfilled, and the “Consolation of Israel” sent. And even now that, for their rejection of the Messiah, they have been, for many ages, sifted like wheat among all nations, and have become a byeword and a reproach among all people, the same immutability which performed former promises, will yet fulfil that which teaches us to hope that the veil shall yet be taken away from the hearts of that people, when Israel shall turn unto the Lord, and be saved.

That God persevered in the accomplishment of a purpose which every thing in the history of the world in general, and of his own chosen people in particular,

strongly provoked him to abandon, is a great and impressive proof of his immutability. But a still greater was wanted ; for though nothing in the history of the world could produce any change in him, yet that does not prove that change with him is impossible. But a complete proof of the utter impossibility of change in him is given, in the death of Christ. When all our iniquities were laid upon him, and the penalty of them all was exacted of him, will not God, in such a case as this, relax a little of the firmness of his purpose, and manifest some slight disposition to change ? When he beholds the agonies that rend the spotless soul of Jesus with unutterable anguish ; when he hears his strong cryings, and sees his tears, and the shrinking and shuddering of nature, not at the thought of death, but of that hour and power of darkness, by which death was preceded, when the malice of men, and the power of Satan, and the curse of a broken law, were all let loose against him, will not God, under such circumstances as these, relent in favour of his well-beloved Son ? Will he not interfere to confound the malice of men, to wither up the power of Satan, and to abate the demands of the law ? No. He will not change even *now*, and thus he gives the most decisive proof that never, on any occasion, is it possible for him to change. Even when the pains of hell got hold of his well-beloved Son, and the sorrows of death encompassed him around, and he found trouble and sorrow, such as mortal man may never adequately conceive,

God manifested no variableness, and no shadow of turning. If he had, what would have been the consequence? A God capable of change, and governing by a law which had been violated, without its demands being fully satisfied, and its penalty fully inflicted, would have been the object presented to the view of angels; an object which it is obvious they never could have contemplated without terror and alarm. The love of an earthly parent to a child, is but a faint shadow of that love with which the Father regards his Son in whom his soul delighted. And never was immutability put to such an awful test, as when the accomplishment of his purpose, with regard to a guilty and polluted race, required him to give up this Son to sufferings of the most fearful description; and never was result so glorious, and never could conviction, by any possibility, be deeper, than that which was impressed upon the hosts of heaven, that in God they could never henceforth dread any change. And the powers of darkness know, that God, who withdrew not his well-beloved Son from one pang that the imputed guilt of an apostate world entitled them to inflict upon him, until he was enabled to say, "It is finished," is a God who cannot, by any possibility, change. And the believer in Jesus knows, that the God who gave up his Son to die for him, is a God who can never change; and he rejoices to know, that if God hath chosen him to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, there is then nothing

in heaven above, or in hell beneath, that can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. And let the thoughtless, heedless, careless sinner know, that God can never change; that his threatenings are as unalterable as his promises. He is satisfying himself, it may be, with some vague, undefined, and unfounded reliance upon the uncovenanted mercies of God; and soothing away the alarms of a guilty conscience by saying,—God is merciful. And merciful he is,—beyond what heart can conceive, but merciful to those only, who seek his mercy in the appointed way. The sinner thinks, perhaps, that a few prayers and tears, wrung from him at the last trying hour, may prevail on a being so merciful, to save him from the fearful and irreversible doom denounced against sinners. But look to the cross of Christ. Had change with God been possible, under any circumstances, would he not have changed the sentence which declares that “The wages of sin is death,” when it was his own well-beloved Son upon whom that death was to be inflicted, and inflicted, with every circumstance of unmitigated agony? And if he spared not his own Son, dare you venture to hope, that he will spare you, as if he loved you better than he loved him? He abated not one iota of the demands of the law in the case of Christ, and will he abate its demands for you? He forgave not imputed sin in Christ, and will he forgive actual guilt in you? With unchanging and unaltering purpose, he said of him, “Awake, O sword, against my



shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow," and can you hope that the sword which was made so sharp to him, shall be sheathed for you? You hope for that which the cross of Christ proclaims to be an impossibility. Away then with the delusive, the destructive hope, and flee to him in whom alone safety is to be found.

We know, then, that God is absolutely incapable of change. It is most essential for our welfare to know this. We can draw proofs of it from various sources, but complete demonstration of it is afforded by the cross of Christ alone. But if Christ was fallen and sinful, then the demonstration entirely fails. Nor does the remark apply to the attribute of Immutability alone. We can produce the most irresistible proof of every particular in this proposition,—‘God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.’ But remove the cross of Christ, from which alone the proof is derived, and we are again plunged into all the uncertainty of those speculations upon the being and attributes of God, the only effect of which has been to shew, that unaided reason could never draw any satisfactory conclusion upon the subject, from the kingdoms either of nature or of providence,—that as the sun can be discovered only by his own light, so God can be known only by his own revelation. Make the cross of Christ the cross of a fallen sinful man, and the same effect is produced. If the death of such

a man could teach us anything as to the being and attributes of God, then surely the instruction must be considered as more than sufficiently given, in the death of all generations of men. Yet who that ever speculated on the subject, ever drew from the fact, that fallen man is mortal, the most resistless proof, and the most glorious illustration, of the Divine perfections? Yet either this fact does afford such proof and illustration, or the death of Christ, supposing him to have been fallen and sinful, affords it not. And if the death of Christ furnish not that proof and illustration, I repeat that we are yet destitute of them; and the gospel, much and justly as we are accustomed to boast of the information which it has communicated to us, has left us where it found us, in a state of total uncertainty with regard to the fundamental article of religion. Take away the cross of Christ, or make it the cross of a fallen sinful man, and God is yet unrevealed; we cannot even prove his existence, and still less can we speak with any degree of certainty as to his character.

The instructions which our Saviour delivered orally to his disciples, comprise the very smallest portion of what he did as our Prophet. These instructions could easily have been delivered,—as to us in point of fact they are delivered—by inspired men. To deliver these instructions, therefore, could not be the object of his incarnation. Neither could his active obedience possibly manifest the whole of the Divine perfections, or the infinity of any of them, and consequently his

active obedience could but form a complete revelation of God. His death was necessary for this purpose. But if his death was merely the death of a fallen and sinful, but regenerated man, then the most instructive, the most glorious and impressive display of the Divine perfections which the universe ever saw, or can ever see, dwindles into one of the most ordinary, every-day occurrences that the world presents to our notice.

I do not hold myself bound so to confine myself to a controversial view of this subject, as to overlook its more striking and important practical bearings. I have already had occasion to shew, that the death of our Prophet very distinctly teaches us, that such is the goodness of God, that there is no extent of guilt which he is not willing to pardon, and therefore that there is no sinner who may not venture to come to the throne of grace. I have also shewn how the same event proves, that to hope for salvation, excepting through an union with Christ, is to hope that God will overturn the whole principles of his moral government, and render the whole scheme of redemption, and all that it cost Christ to accomplish it, a mere nullity ; and that, for the purpose of sparing the sinner the trouble of denying himself, and abandoning his sins. I would now further remark, that the death of our Prophet distinctly teaches us to what extent our obedience to God must be carried. His command is, that we should be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, and should resist even unto blood, striving against sin. His

own practice goes to the full extent of his precept. He obeyed even unto death. He has thus effectually cut off every excuse that can possibly be made for a limited obedience. Nothing is more common than for men to plead, in palliation of some palpable neglect of duty, or of perseverance in conduct which their own conscience condemns, the resistless strength of the temptation. They will admit that they are wrong, but then they plead, How can they help it? How can they expose themselves to the ridicule of their companions, to the frown of those whose society constitutes their chief delight, to discredit in the world, to the displeasure of influential friends, or to severe worldly losses, by a rigidly scrupulous attention to what the Bible and their own conscience declare to be their duty? Principle no doubt is a good thing; but then unhappily that which is right, is not always that which is expedient. Now if there ever existed a human being who could produce a valid plea for limiting his obedience, and for making the right yield to the expedient, it was the man Christ Jesus. What an endless variety of apologies might he have made, for declining from the path of obedience, when it became the path of suffering? He might have pleaded that as his obedience was voluntary, he ought not to be required to submit to aught that was painful; that he sufficiently honoured the law, when he yielded obedience to its active precepts, without coming under its penal endurances. He might have pleaded that he was the son, and had never offended, and

therefore might well claim some indulgence. He might have alleged the great immediate happiness that would result from all men owning him as the Messiah, and contrasted it with the misery which must ensue on his being despised and rejected of men. If strength of temptation can sanction a limitation of our obedience, then never were temptations equal to those with which he was tried. And if the losses and sufferings that would follow a resolute discharge of duty, may be pleaded as a valid reason for neglecting it, then who had ever such a reason for neglecting it, as he who could so truly say, "Behold and see if any sorrow be like unto my sorrow?" Never, however, did he seek to limit his obedience. Though the path assigned him by the will of the Father, was a path of ceaseless and unexampled suffering,—was everywhere strewed with thorns, and wet with tears and blood, yet it was his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father. "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered." And if no relaxation of the stern demands of the law was ever made in his favour, dare we suppose that any relaxation will be made in our favour? Have we any apology as valid for declining the path of duty, even under the most trying possible circumstances, as he had? And shall we be permitted to decline or draw back, where he was imperiously required to go forward, even though it were to a baptism of blood? No. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the



servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

And the obedience of our Prophet "even unto death," was essentially necessary to teach us this truth. Had his obedience been limited to something short of death, then we would have felt encouraged to set a limit, and that a much narrower limit, to our own obedience. But if even death in its most fearful form, did not authorize the Son to decline from the path of obedience, then his every pang impresses upon our hearts the lesson, that when God commands, there is no plea, however plausible, that can possibly be admitted as an excuse for neglecting to obey ;—that though obedience should lead us through a fiery furnace, or a lion's den, the example of him who obeyed through sufferings more fearful by far than either, infallibly assures us, that no argument can apologize for our turning back, when God calls us to go forward. Moreover had his obedience fallen short of obedience unto death, it would have been impossible to say exactly how much had been required of him, and therefore how much could be required of us. And timid martyrs would, when called upon to suffer, have been tempted to yield to what they might have considered the necessity of the case ; and sacrifice to idols under the plea, that they could not be called upon to perform an act of obedience, which had not been required of Christ himself. And vain-glorious martyrs,—some such there were,—would have been encouraged, rashly and presumptuously,

to offer themselves to the stake, urged on by the desire of yielding an obedience which Christ had never yielded, and of enduring sufferings with which even he was never tried. Wherefore in all things,—in obedience as well as other things,—it became him to have the preeminence; so that when we feel tempted to set a limit to our obedience, we may learn from our Prophet, that there is no ground upon which such a limitation can be defended. When a man begins to inquire, not how he may most effectually obey God, but within how narrow limits he may venture to contract his obedience; when he begins to ask, not what is right, but what is expedient, let him look to the cross of Christ, and either renounce such principles, or renounce the name of Christian.

Whether, then, we look to the communication of theological truth, or to the illustration and enforcement of practical principle, it is plain that our instruction would have been altogether defective, had not our Prophet died. Even with his death before their eyes, men do grievously err, and call themselves Christians, when their conduct is such, that unless Christianity be a dream, their salvation is impossible. How much more would this have been the case had Christ not died at all! If with his obedience even unto death before them, they can yet call themselves Christians, while carrying their obedience only as far as expediency warrants, how much more would they have done this, had his obedience been of a limited nature!

Again, it is to be recollected that Christ still continues to be the Prophet of the Church. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and we can derive that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation, from none other than from him. He still continues to teach us, "by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation." And no other can teach us. It is important for us to remember this; for we are very apt to overlook it, and to seek instruction from sources which have it not to give. If Christ still hold the office of Prophet, then it is impossible that any one can give us that "wisdom which cometh down from above," excepting him. For, if we could acquire that wisdom, or any portion of that wisdom from any other, then, so far, would that other be our Saviour, and Christ's office of Prophet be superseded. It may be said, perhaps, that it is from the Holy Spirit that we receive that wisdom, and that he is the great enlightener; and it is truly said. It is the Holy Ghost alone who applies to us the benefits resulting from all the offices of Christ; but then, in so doing, he is acting as the Spirit of Christ, and is given to us by him. While, therefore, he is the great and only enlightener, he is not our Prophet, but takes of the things that are Christ's, and shews them unto us. And that none save Christ, by his Spirit, can give us any heavenly wisdom, is abundantly proved, by the different effects produced by the same Gospel, announced in the same terms, to different men. In one, its threatenings

against all ungodliness arouse the most lively concern, its promises awaken the most delightful hopes, and it becomes "the power of God unto salvation." By another, the same threatenings and promises are heard with the most profound indifference, and produce no effect whatever, save that of hardening him more and more, every time he so hears them, against their influence. Now how is this fact,—a fact known to every man,—to be accounted for? It cannot be accounted for by any difference in point of learning, or talent, or natural temperament, or by any external circumstances. For men of all different kinds and degrees of learning, talent, temperament, and external circumstances, are found both among believers and unbelievers. The fact can be accounted for only on this ground, that to the one, the truths declared have been rendered efficacious, by the great Prophet sending his Spirit to bring them home to his heart with demonstration and power; while the other, forgetting his dependence upon this agency, seeks not for it by earnest prayer, and therefore finds that to him the application of means, perhaps in themselves more powerful, are totally unavailing,—and unavailing possibly, because their apparent power has led him to depend upon them, without looking beyond them. Could any means, however powerful, savingly enlighten us, without the agency of the Holy Spirit given to us by Christ, then might we safely rest in the means alone, as we are always too prone to do. And if he who gives us the Holy Spirit, be a fallen,

sinful, and regenerated man, then I see no reason why we should not expect any other fallen, sinful and regenerated man, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, to impart to us the same gift, though perhaps in a smaller measure. To make our Prophet, then, a fallen, sinful, regenerated man, goes very directly to establish more than one of the most fatal errors, with which the Church of Rome has ever been charged.

If Christ be our Prophet, therefore, it becomes us to attend to the instructions which he hath given with the most reverential regard. No man professing Christianity, will venture to say, in so many words, that the Eternal Word was made flesh, and endured so much, in order to give to us a revelation, with which it is a matter of little or no consequence whether we be acquainted or not. No such man will even venture to say, that there can be any thing of greater importance, than to make ourselves acquainted with that, which he held to be so important. Yet if we actually neglect to study the work of redemption, and prefer a thousand things to the acquisition of that wisdom which is from above, we are guilty of saying this, and of saying it in a manner much stronger than words can express it. And to plead that we never gave utterance to this blasphemy, in so many words, is no extenuation, but, on the contrary, a grievous aggravation of our guilt. For if that man be culpable, who maintains and acts upon an erroneous principle, how much more culpable is he, who acts upon a principle so utterly and indefensibly



bad, that he not only dares not maintain it, but would shudder even to utter it! Yet how many there are, even among professing Christians, who practically say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," no man needs to be told. That any human being should have been found, even among our fallen race, capable of treating, as a matter hardly worthy of attention, that which, when no created being was found capable of revealing, the only begotten Son himself humbled himself so low, in order to reveal; and capable of looking with the most hardened indifference, upon that affecting and impressive display of the Divine perfections, exhibited in the cross of Christ, could not have been anticipated—could not have been believed, till it was actually proved by the experiment being made. There are men eager in the pursuit of knowledge, and who suffer nothing to escape their examination, from behemoth to the worm,—from the cedar that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that groweth out of the wall,—from the combinations of the planets to the transformations of an insect, but from whose range of study, the Maker of all things is most carefully excluded, and from whose heart God is most resolutely shut out. Perhaps there exists not a more deplorable proof of the fatal nature of the fall of man, nor can Satan point to any more signal proof of the power of his delusions, nor can angels, in their visits to this earth, meet with a more lamentable and instructive spectacle, than

such a man,—a man enriched with all the acquisitions, and adorned with all the honours, of science, and yet whose mind is totally impervious to the simple reflection, that if those works which he delights to investigate be wonderful,

‘How passing wonder He who made them such !’

No position, it appears to me, can well be more simple or less liable to dispute than this, that if the material system of the universe be glorious, and a knowledge of all its departments important,—much more glorious, and important to be known in all its parts, must be that moral system, for the sake of which alone the material fabric was reared ; a system throughout which the “ Sun of Righteousness,” as its centre, diffuses the light of heavenly wisdom, and the riches of heavenly joy. And with whatever pity or compassion the philosopher may feel himself entitled to look down upon the untutored peasant,

‘ Whose soul proud science never taught to stray,  
Far as the solar walk, or milky way,’

and for whom suns arise, only to light him to his toils, and set, only to leave him to recruit his exhausted strength ; with much greater pity and compassion is that peasant, if he has been taught in the school of Christ, entitled to look down on the proudest name that ever science owned, if separated from the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. A knowledge of the works of God, our own unaided efforts are able to attain ; a knowledge of God himself, none

but God manifest in the flesh could reveal. And he surely, is a woful monument of the utter perversion of the human mind, who prefers the former of these species of knowledge to the latter ; and imagines that he ennobles himself, by extending our knowledge of the things that God has made, while he perhaps sneers at the man who, by studying the work of redemption, is seeking to extend our knowledge of God himself. If Christ be our Prophet, it is no longer a question whether the information which he came to give, be more important than any information which we could acquire without his advent. He has given to us the revelation of God, and if we neglect it, or prefer any other knowledge to it, we do so at our peril. The gospel is not one of the things which, if it do us no good, will do us no harm. We must all account to Christ for the use which we have made of the knowledge given ; and to each of us it will be the savour of life, or the savour of death. It will save us from our sins, or it will leave us without excuse. I therefore repeat, that if Christ be our Prophet, we are bound by the most sacred ties, and under the most fearful sanctions, to attend to his instructions with the most reverential regard ; for surely it will not be said that he can be safe who treats as a trifle, that which God became incarnate to reveal.

If Christ be our Prophet, we are also bound to receive his instructions with all the docility of a little child, without pretending to sit in judgment upon

the truth or propriety of these instructions. The limits of the province that belongs to reason in religion, it cannot be difficult to assign. It is the duty of reason to ascertain, whether that which professes to be a divine revelation, really be so or not. And supposing this to be determined in the affirmative, it is then the office of reason to ascertain what it is that that revelation teaches,—what is the plain, simple, unsophisticated meaning of the language which it addresses to us. But beyond this, reason may not go. Nothing can be more preposterous than to admit a revelation to be from God, and yet imagine that we have a right to reject, or alter, or in any way modify what that revelation teaches. It is no apology for this absurdly to say, that it contains things mysterious, and most directly opposed to some of our most deeply cherished views, and feelings, and prejudices. A revelation, to do us good, must contain such things. It is not given that it may be modified into an agreement with our views and prejudices, for it could in this case be of no use to us whatever, but that all our views and feelings and principles may, by it, be corrected, and brought into conformity with the truth. We have no right, whatever, to select what portions of it we will receive, for it must be unreservedly received as a whole, with the most perfect submission of the mind to all its dictates, else it is wholly rejected. He who receives only so much as appears to him to be credible, plainly does not receive any portion of the word of God; for what he does believe, he

believes, not because God has said it, but because he can prove it, whether God had said it or not. His faith therefore stands, not at all upon the word of God, but wholly upon his own wisdom, and the authority of God is entirely rejected. That there should be such men, is not wonderful; but it is wonderful that they should call themselves believers in a divine revelation. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the attitude in which it becomes us to listen to the instructions of our Prophet, even when these instructions come to lay an unsparing hand upon all our pleasant things,—to root out our most deeply-fixed prejudices,—to repress our most cherished inclinations,—and to bind us down to a course of self-denial and mortification, most painful to flesh and blood. We have no more right, and no more power to improve the word of God, than we have to improve the works of God. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye him," is a command to which there is no limitation, and from which there is no exception.

To increase in divine knowledge is also a duty which we owe to our Prophet. While there is in his revelation of God a depth which the profoundest of human minds can never fathom, an extent which the most capacious of human understandings can never fully comprehend, and from which the hosts of heaven gather ever new accessions to their knowledge; there is also a simplicity by which even little children may be nourished up unto everlasting life;



and the Holy Spirit, by whose agency our Prophet teaches us, can render the Holy Scriptures, the means by which he teaches us, as efficacious to them, as to those of riper years. But while the Christian will feel that he has indeed enjoyed a rich privilege, if he has from a child known the Holy Scriptures, he will also feel, that when he becomes a man, it will be proper that he should put away childish things, and grow in the knowledge of God. Not a few who call themselves Christians, seem to consider, not how they may most effectually increase their knowledge of God, but with how little knowledge of him they may be safe. But if to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, be life eternal, then the Christian will feel that it is not so much his duty as his privilege, to be continually growing in that knowledge. The desire which he feels after this knowledge cries unceasingly, ‘ Give, Give ; ’ and every acquisition which he makes, only stimulates his desires after further acquisitions, and increases his power to make them. When God shall appear, we shall be like him, because we shall then see him as he is. And the more that we can see of him here, the more like to him we shall be, in holiness and in happiness. The man who thinks that he has acquired as much knowledge of God as is necessary, is proving that as yet he knows not God at all.

Another duty which we owe to our Prophet, is to carry out his instructions into practice. To make us holy is the effect intended to be produced, by all that

Christ has done for us. "He died that he might redeem us from all our iniquities, and might purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And if this effect be not produced, it signifies nothing how correct our creed, or how loud our professions may be; we are yet "In the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, if ye do not the things which I say?" saith Jesus; and elsewhere he states the necessity of carrying his instructions out into practice, in the following impressive language—"Who-soever therefore heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. And the storm descended, and rivers came, and the winds blew, and fell upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And whosoever heareth these my words, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, and the storm descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and its fall was great."<sup>1</sup> If they do grievously err who hope to be saved by their obedience, thus instead of making holiness the very substance of salvation, and its attainment the very highest object of human hope, sinking it into the rank of something desirable not on its own account, but as a means for obtaining something of greater value; they do not less grievously err who imagine that because the righteousness

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 24.

of Christ is the sole ground of our salvation, therefore their own holiness is a matter of little or no consequence. For to hope that we may be saved, without being made holy, is a direct contradiction in terms. It is to hope, in other words that we may be saved, without being saved. It ought not to be forgotten, that holiness is not, and cannot be the means of salvation, for this plain reason that it is salvation itself. If therefore we should be able to say to Christ, " Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works ? " All this will avail us nothing, if we be " workers of iniquity."

If Christ be our Prophet, then we are bound to communicate to others that knowledge of God that he has taught to us. To this we are urged by every doctrine which the gospel inculcates, and by every principle which it implants in our hearts. If we love God, we will desire to make his glory known. If we love men, we will be anxious to promote their best interests. And if we love not God and men, or if our love to them be too feeble to urge us on to make any active exertions, or submit to any sacrifices, I need not stop to prove that we have yet to learn what Christianity is. If Christ submitted to all the humiliation, and endured all the sufferings recorded in the gospel, in order to manifest the glory of God, and to save the souls of men ; can we call ourselves his disciples, and say that we have drank of his

Spirit, if amongst us, and around us, and throughout the world, we can see the glory of God given to a thousand idols, and the souls of men perishing, without feeling ourselves urged to every exertion that may be within our power, in order to terminate a state which no Christian can contemplate without the most painful feelings ? No, the Christian is essentially a missionary, and every Christian Church is essentially a Missionary Society. The believer, in learning the value of his own soul, has learned how to estimate the souls of other men ; and the same spirit that imparted to him a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and taught him to feel all its importance, imparted to him at the same time, the desire to communicate it to others. Every man who calls himself a Christian, professes to be a living monument of the glory of God ; and according as his conduct is, or is not, consistent with this profession, will it be an encouragement to, or a stumbling block in the way of others embracing the gospel. His character must exercise a beneficial or a malignant influence, upon all who are connected with him ; and either his light will so shine before men, as to lead others to glorify our Father who is in heaven, or his conduct will lead to the conclusion that the adoption of the gospel is calculated only to add hypocrisy to guilt, and thus cause “ the way of truth to be evil spoken of.” The believer therefore feels, that independent of his own personal obligations to hold the truth in righteousness ; there rests upon him an awful



responsibility with regard to the effect which his conduct may have upon other men. In these days especially will every Christian weigh well the import of the declaration, "He that is not for me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." In primitive times, the holy lives of Christians was one of the principal means of giving to the gospel such astonishing success; and were every man who calls himself a Christian now, to prove himself by his conduct to be a Christian in reality, there can be no doubt that Christianity would rapidly spread throughout the world. It is a melancholy reflection, that while the progress of Christianity has been so slow, that progress has never been retarded by all the efforts of its declared opponents. A man, in order effectually to injure Christianity, must profess himself a Christian; and I cannot think that it is overstating the matter to say, that every man who calls himself a Christian, without in reality being so, inflicts a more essential injury upon Christianity, and does more to retard its progress in the world, than any one declared opponent that ever existed.

Upon the whole then, it appears that the death of Christ, and consequently his Incarnation, was essentially necessary to the discharge of the duties of his Prophetic office. Without dying he could not have given us that manifestation of the Divine character,—that knowledge of the perfections of God, without which we can never have our hearts "right



with God." And it no less plainly appears, that to make him a fallen sinful man, is to sweep away the very ground of all the knowledge which he imparted, and to extinguish the light of his Revelation, by covering it with a cloud of impenetrable darkness. If he had no sin, either original or actual, then he was not fallen and sinful, and we draw from his life, and especially from his death, a knowledge of God which we can never exhaust. If he had either original or actual sin, then indeed he was fallen and sinful ; and in this case we can learn no more from his death, than we can learn from that of any other man.

I may remark also, that every argument which has been used to disprove the tenet that Christ was a fallen and sinful man, applies with equal force to prove that he was not a mere man.

## CHAPTER III.

### CHRIST OUR PRIEST.

I NOW proceed to consider the Priesthood of our Saviour. This also will lead us to see the necessity of his death, and consequently of his Incarnation ; and at the same time will carry us very directly and irresistibly to the conclusion that in becoming man, he did not become a fallen sinful man. That he actually was a Priest, I hold to be sufficiently proved by the fact, that he is called so in Scripture. It is no doubt argued that he is called so only figuratively, as all Christians are called priests, and with a reference to the priests under the Levitical dispensation. To this I reply, that a figure must be drawn from a reality ; and if he was only figuratively a priest, then where is the man who was really one ? It will not avail to say that under the law there were real priests, from whom the name was improperly applied to him. For if he was no Priest, then unquestionably they were none ; unless it be maintained that they did what he could not do ; and that the Jewish dispensation, instead of being only the shadow of

good things to come, was in fact the reality of which Christianity is only the shadow ; a position which I suppose few will be hardy enough to maintain. If then the great “ High Priest of our profession ” was only figuratively a Priest, assuredly those priests who only exercised the delegated powers which they received from him, could be no more ; and consequently there never was a real priest in existence. The very word, upon this supposition, stands in the unprecedented situation of having a figurative application, without having ever had a real literal meaning. But it will be said that the priests under the law were really priests. This I most readily admit ; and I admit too that the sacrifices which they offered, were perfectly efficacious for the purposes for which they were appointed. They exempted the offender from temporal punishment, and restored him to his place in society, and to his situation in the congregation of the Lord. But they could do no more. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin. But if the priests under the law were real priests, and their sacrifices possessed a real efficacy, to however limited an extent, then we seem to be shut up to one of these conclusions,—either that the sacrifices were efficacious by reason of their own intrinsic value,—or that they were so by reason of the power and favour which the offering priest enjoyed with God,—or, finally, that they derived their efficacy solely from their reference to, and connection with, the sacrifice offered by a priest of a higher order.

The first of these conclusions will hardly be espoused even by the hardest rationalist. If the second be adopted, then it is admitted that under the law, there was an atonement, to a certain extent ; and that there was a priest who, through the medium of gifts and sacrifices, offered for sins, had access to God, and a ground upon which to found an acceptable and a prevalent intercession, in behalf of the sinner ; advantages of which, under the Christian dispensation, we are totally deprived. And if Christ, instead of giving us the substance, of which the law only exhibited the shadow, has in fact reduced to a figure that atonement, and that priesthood, which under the law had an actual and efficient reality, then the Apostle had little ground for his boasting of the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron. We come then to the conclusion that Christ was a real Priest, and the Priest from whom all other priests derived their power ; and through whom alone their sacrifices possessed any efficacy.

The duties which Christ discharges as our Priest, are to make atonement for us, and to intercede for us ; or to adopt better language than any that I can frame, “ Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God ; and in his making continual intercession for us.” Now these duties he discharged from the beginning, for from the beginning he forgave sin. This however he could not do excepting as a Priest. He was the

“Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” His Incarnation and death were so absolutely certain, that men were pardoned in consequence of his Atonement, long before that atonement was actually made; so that his failure in his work was an impossibility; unless it were possible that the counsel of God could fail, and that, through a defect of prescience, he had admitted into heaven, the ‘righteous Abel’ and others whom it might be necessary afterwards to cast out.

The necessity of an atonement,—the absolute impossibility of pardoning the sinner without it, has, I conceive, been already abundantly manifested. If sin indeed be considered merely as a debt, then the necessity of an atonement cannot be proved; for there can be no impropriety in a rich creditor forgiving a poor debtor, without the interposition of any surety. That our sins are debts is perfectly true; but many and mischievous are the errors into which men have been led, by considering them merely as debts; and one of the worst of these errors is, that if sin be merely a debt, then is an atonement altogether unnecessary. But if God be considered as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, appointing what is necessary for the welfare of all his creatures,—and if he be a wise Ruler who does not make a world which has no connection with, nor effect upon the whole, but makes every world with reference to all other worlds; in other words, if no part of the universe be useless or superfluous;—and if our sins be considered, as



infractions of that law, of the inviolable sanctity of which it is necessary that every creature should be clearly convinced, and as practical denials of those divine perfections, of the absolute infinity and immutability of which it is necessary that every creature should be well assured ; then they assume a very different aspect. In this case we see clearly that were God to forgive them without atonement, he would in truth, by so doing, abrogate the law, of which they are infractions, and acquiesce in that denial of his own perfections which they imply. Let the death of Christ as a Priest be denied ; let it be admitted that it was the death of only a fallen sinful man, dying for the same reason that other men die, and for what possible purpose, unless a most disastrous purpose, such a world as this was created, I cannot even venture to conjecture. But view our sins as a rebellion against the Supreme Ruler, and the death of Christ as the death of our great High-Priest, atoning for these sins ; and we see at once the high and important situation which man occupies in the government of God ; while the atonement through which his salvation is effected, exhibits to the hosts of heaven a view of the sanctity of the law, and of the glory of the divine perfections, which as no language could exhibit, so no language can describe.

This view of the matter however has been sufficiently discussed, and it has been shewn that God could not have pardoned sin without atonement, without producing consequences the most disastrous

to the whole universe. I shall now endeavour therefore, through a somewhat different train of reflection, to lead the reader to the same conclusion, and to prove that the death of Christ was really an atoning sacrifice. It will, I think, be admitted, as a maxim of indisputable truth, that pain inflicted when there is no necessity for it, or inflicted to an extent beyond what the necessity of the case demands, is a violation of justice. And it will be admitted that God cannot by any possibility violate justice. Whenever therefore God does inflict pain, it will be admitted that that pain, and the whole extent of it, was required by the necessity of the case; and consequently that the remission of any part of it, would be unjust. But God did inflict pain upon Christ,—nay “it pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief.” Now either that pain, and every part of it, was imperiously required by justice, or it was not. If it was not,—if our salvation, the object of Christ’s coming, could have been accomplished without it, then God, in the infliction of this pain, was clearly violating justice,—a violation of which they surely will not believe him to have been guilty, who seem to consider God, as merely a name for some unintelligible personification of mercy. It is of no use to say that God might justly inflict a degree of pain which Christ was willing to bear, in order to promote our salvation. For we are arguing on the supposition that our salvation possibly could have been effected by him, without these sufferings. And it is not easy to see

how our salvation could be effected by his sufferings, if they were unnecessary, and therefore unjust, because carried beyond what the necessity of the case demanded. It must be concluded then, that the sufferings of Christ, in all their extent, were imperiously demanded by justice.

We must next inquire then, upon what ground Justice founded this demand. That his sufferings were of the most agonizing kind, cannot be denied. Extenuate them as you will ; call them the sufferings of a mere man, still in the union of bodily pain with mental anguish, they stand unequalled in the history of human endurance. Now, why were sufferings of this exquisite kind necessary ? Say that he was bearing our iniquities in his own body on the accursed tree,—that he was sustaining the curse due to us for our violations of the law, and the reply appears to be perfectly satisfactory, because it appears to assign a perfectly sufficient ground for these sufferings. Assign any of the inferior grounds which have been alleged as the cause of his sufferings, and see whether they are equally satisfactory, or whether they will render these sufferings at all compatible with Justice. It is said that he died to confirm the truth of his doctrines. Granted ; but was his death absolutely necessary for this purpose ? Would his doctrines not have been believed, had he not died to confirm them ? Had he constructed them with so little intrinsic rationality, and supported them by so little external evidence, that his death was necessary, im-

periously and essentially necessary, to their reception? Or, if his death was necessary, were all the agonizing circumstances that attended it, necessary too? Unless this be affirmed, unless it be maintained that had one pang that was inflicted upon him been spared, his doctrines could not have been believed, then it must be admitted that to say he died merely to confirm his doctrines, does by no means render his sufferings even compatible with Justice; much less does it give a satisfactory account of them. But that he died in confirmation of his doctrines at all, is an allegation that we surely could little expect to hear from men who require very different evidence indeed, than either his life or his death affords, before they will receive any doctrine that he has taught,—who will believe nothing, unless they imagine that they can prove it, whether Christ ever taught it or not. Moreover, if there be any one doctrine which, beyond all others, his death was designed to confirm, it is this, that he was equal with God; for it was for the alleged blasphemy of this, that he was condemned as worthy of death by the rulers of the Jews. Yet this is the very doctrine, which they who tell us that his death was intended to confirm his doctrine, make it the fundamental point of their system to deny. We may surely say to them, if he died to confirm his doctrine, why do you not believe his doctrine? We expect more consistency in rational men. Either admit then, that his death was more than a confirmation of his doctrine, or admit that his sufferings were a



plain violation of Justice, since you receive no doctrine which you would not have received, whether he had suffered or not.

But farther, the death of Christ could not by any possibility prove his doctrines to be true, if they were previously doubtful. It could only prove his own sincerity ; and if this was doubtful before, it is uncertain whether it could have been very satisfactorily established by that event, under the particular circumstances of the case. But without dwelling upon this ; I would observe that to prove a doctrine to be true, and to *make* it true, are two very different things. Now the death of Christ did not merely prove his doctrines to be true ; but it made them true. For example, he declared that his death was necessary in order to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,—“ It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Now if Christ could actually have given the Holy Spirit without dying, this doctrine is false.<sup>1</sup> The same remark may, in one form or another, be applied to every doctrine of the gospel. They depend not for their confirmation, but for their *truth*, on the death of Christ. Take that away, and Christianity at once dwindles down to simple Deism. Again, therefore, I remark, that to say that Christ died to confirm the doctrines of simple Deism, is just to say, that suffering was inflicted upon him, in order to prove the truth of

<sup>1</sup> See note D. Appendix.



doctrines which the Deist pretends that he can prove very well, though Christ had never either lived or died. In this case then, assuredly his sufferings were not at all required by the necessity of the case, and were consequently inflicted in palpable violation of justice.

Again, it is said that he died to give us an example of patience in suffering. This also is most fully granted; but the question is, was his death imperiously necessary for this purpose? Could we not possibly have acquired for ourselves, or could God not possibly have wrought in us, the spirit of fortitude and patience, had the sufferings of Christ been less severe? The objector to the atonement cannot on his own principles, pretend to say this. He must then admit, either that the sufferings of Christ had a higher object, or that they were unjustly inflicted. Neither this purpose then, nor the proving of his doctrines, could render his death a matter of imperious necessity, nor consequently a matter of justice.

Another purpose which, it is said, was answered by his death was, that by rising again, he might give to us the most perfect assurance of the resurrection. Now it is most readily admitted, that the accomplishment of this purpose rendered his death imperiously necessary. But then the easiest and most honourable death, would have accomplished this purpose, just as well as the most ignominious, and the most agonizing. The agony in the garden and on the cross, and all the bitterness of death, were

totally uncalled for by this object, and were therefore inflicted to the violation of justice, as they were inflicted without being at all required by the necessity of the case.

Are there any other purposes supposed to be accomplished by the sufferings and death of Christ? It is useless to inquire. Be these purposes what they may, if they fall short of an atonement for sin, I may venture to say that it will be found impossible, on any ground which these purposes can afford, to reconcile his sufferings and death with the plainest dictates of unalterable justice. Justice then did imperiously demand an atonement, for it demanded the sufferings and death of Christ; and upon no inferior ground can the justice of the demand be vindicated.

But in maintaining the doctrine of atonement, we are in the habit of using language much more displeasing to those who deny it, than when we say that an atonement was required by the justice of God. For we are very apt to talk of the wrath of God against sin: and while the Scriptures tell us that God is angry with the wicked every day, nay that his soul abhorreth the wicked; and while they describe his wrath in terms of the most terrific import, we hold it to be the very reverse of modesty to comply with the enervated delicacy of modern theology, and reject such expressions as harsh and inappropriate. For it is quite clear that sin must be the object of supreme hatred to God, since it not only tramples upon his authority, but denies his

very existence, and would, were it permitted to produce its full effect, involve the whole universe in undistinguished ruin. It is perfectly true that wrath is not in God, as it is in us, an agitating, disturbing passion, excited by some strong impulse, and following out its career with blind, ungovernable fury. God is totally unsusceptible of any passion ; but we can speak of him only in human language, and we ascribe to him wrath, much in the same way that we ascribe to him hands and feet. But then there is something in God, analogous to wrath in us ; and that it is not in him an agitating passion, renders it just so much the more dreadful. Passion would abate, its fervour would cool ; and the same weakness that gave it birth, would ensure its termination. But wrath in God is not an emotion, and therefore can no more change, than any other part of the Divine character can change. And while the Scriptures call this particular manifestation of holiness and justice,—for it is nothing else—by the names of wrath, and abhorrence, and indignation, we need not scruple to call it by the same names ; since it will infallibly produce all the same effects that these passions tend to produce among men, and that in a manner infinitely more terrible to the objects of it.

Now the question is, how are we to escape this wrath ? As it is not a passion, it does not render God unwilling to forgive ; but, derived from the purity of his holiness, and the inflexibility of his justice, it plainly renders forgiveness impossible,

unless that forgiveness can be rendered perfectly compatible with these perfections,—with the sanctity of the law, and the safety of the universe. God cannot deny himself, nor act in a way contrary to his own perfections. Now an atonement, which shews the hatefulness of sin more impressively than either our obedience, or our destruction could do ; and displays all the perfections of God, in a way in which they never otherwise could have been displayed, does render it not only a just but a glorious thing for God to forgive the sinner. Pardon communicated through this medium, shews God to be just, while he is “the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” “He washed us from our sins in his blood ;” but if his blood was shed merely as a testimony to the truth of his doctrines, or as an example of suffering patience, or as a preparatory step to the resurrection, this cannot be true ; we are as yet unwashed, and the wrath of God abideth upon us still. But that wrath Jesus in very truth did feel to the uttermost, when he cried out, “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint : my heart is like wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd ; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”<sup>1</sup> Sin, strictly speaking, is never pardoned. The sins of unbelievers are not pardoned ; for they are driven away in their iniquities. The sins of the believer are transferred to Christ. He took

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxii. 14, 15.

them upon him, and while they are fully and freely pardoned to the believer, they were not pardoned to his substitute. The penalty of them was exacted of him who was able to endure it without sinking under it. And when he had endured that penalty, it not only becomes a just thing to remit it to the believer, but it would be unjust to inflict upon him personally, that which he has already endured in his surety. I hold it, therefore, to be language most Scriptural and true, to say, that we can escape the wrath of God only through the sufferings of Christ, who was made a curse for us. Hence the Church is called a "purchased possession," we are expressly declared to be "bought with a price," and the price is stated to be "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Nay so completely was the notion of *purchase*, in early times associated with atonement, that the very word דמים came to signify a price.<sup>1</sup>

Now if any person choose to say that this represents God as implacable,—as determined to have punishment, and an infinite amount of it, which Christ endures for so many, while the divine wrath still continues unabated toward all others,—that it represents the Father and Son as actuated by different, and even opposite feelings toward the sinner, I can only reply that I am totally at a loss to discover upon what part of the statement the objection can be founded. If we look to the sufferings of Christ, I

<sup>1</sup> See note E. Appendix.



say that the infliction of these sufferings can be reconciled with justice, on no other ground than the supposition that they formed an atonement for our sins ; for, on no other ground that has ever yet been alleged, were they imperiously required by the necessity of the case. And taking a higher view of the matter, I say that had God, as supreme Ruler of the universe, after he had declared that death was the wages of sin, forgiven sin without any atonement, —without actually inflicting the penalty, then the plainest dictates of justice had been violated, and the very foundations of his moral government subverted. That the Father was less deeply interested in the salvation of sinners than the Son, or that the Son is less unalterably repugnant to the salvation of sinners, excepting through the medium of atonement, than the Father,—that the love of the one is, or at any time ever was, greater than that of the other, is most distinctly and unequivocally denied. Nor am I aware that from any part of the preceding statement a difference of affection toward fallen man, in the different persons of the Trinity, can be drawn. I have already shewn why neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost could become incarnate. But if I have said any thing from which it may be fairly inferred, either that they were less deeply interested in the success of the atonement, or that the Son would have been more ready to forgive the sinner without it, in so far I am not only willing to admit, but anxious to announce, that I must

have misstated the doctrine of Scripture upon the subject.

But the Mercy of God, it is thought, would have been much more highly honoured, and more conspicuously displayed, had that mercy been at once applied to the sinner, without any atonement being required. God, it is said cannot be considered as exercising mercy at all, in the pardon of the sinner, when he does not grant the pardon without first inflicting the penalty upon the sinner's Surety. Now, if one attribute of the Divine character can be considered, as more imperiously demanding atonement than any other, mercy is assuredly that attribute ; for I apprehend that without the atonement, the very existence of such an attribute as Mercy in the Divine character, is incapable of any satisfactory proof. We want to know that God is merciful,—that he is infinite in mercy,—that there is no case of guilt to which his mercy will not extend. And how are we to learn this ? Should God forgive some sinners, and condemn others ? this would prove that his mercy was limited. And as every sinner, when made acquainted with the plague of his own heart, very naturally thinks himself to be the chief of sinners, every sinner would in this case, when he felt his need of mercy, feel also that he was placed beyond that limit to which mercy extends. Even the death of Christ does not always prevent him from thinking this. But let us suppose that God should pardon every sinner, without requiring any atonement, would

this prove him to be merciful? No, this abrogation of the law, this encouragement to sin, this utter subversion of his moral government, would be the very reverse of an act of mercy. And moreover, should God pardon all sin, the inference would be, not that God is merciful, but that sin is no evil. Even the atonement does not prevent the sinner from thinking that God is like himself, and does not hate sin. If sin were pardoned without any atonement this would be an undeniable truth. Now we know that God is merciful, not simply because he pardons sin, but because he pardons it after he has awfully demonstrated how infinitely and unalterably hateful it is to him; and because he gave up his Son to death in order to render pardon possible. This was an act of mercy so great, that none other can ever surpass, or even equal it. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And we hold the Apostle's reasoning to be irresistible, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" This is an argument with which we can go to the mourning sinner, whose soul is troubled, while conscience is setting all his sins in array before him, and who is ready to say 'There is no hope;' and we can tell him that God is perfectly willing to bestow upon him all the glory and blessedness of heaven. And we can shew him that he has no reason whatever to doubt this; for when

God brings him into that city of which such glorious things are spoken, and crowns him with glory, honour, and immortality, he is in all this giving him a much smaller expression of love than that which he has already given, in giving up his Son to death for sinners. Here is an act of mercy so much greater than any other that ever can be displayed, that we need not wonder that unbelief,—that doubts as to whether God really loveth us, and be willing to fulfil to us every promise that he has made, should be set forth in Scripture as the worst of sins. After such an expression of his love, after such a manifestation of mercy as the cross of Christ affords,—the very highest that heaven could furnish,—can any thing so deeply mark the depravity of the human heart, or offer such an insult to God, as still resolutely to doubt whether he be willing to “forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all our iniquities?”

But, let it be supposed, that the death of Christ was not strictly and properly an atonement, demanded by the justice of God, and necessary to avert from us the curse of a broken law, and we are not only effectually deprived of this, the only sufficient argument by which we can combat the sinner’s fears, the only satisfactory ground upon which we can call upon the sinner to trust in God, but it becomes altogether impossible to prove that there is any such attribute in the Divine character, as mercy at all. The most plausible arguments that could be used for this purpose, might be readily met by equally plausible

objections. And even without any objections whatever, take away the atonement, and there is no argument that will lead the sinner to rely on the mercy of God. This is a feeling which does not naturally, nor easily enter into the guilty heart. The sinner is more inclined to dread God, and when sensible of his guilt, like Adam, to hide himself from the face of the Lord. Even the atonement is not uniformly and immediately successful in removing the fears which guilt has awakened, and in leading the sinner to believe that after a thousand sins and follies past, God still views him with a Father's love, and will welcome him back with every expression of a Father's tenderness. Take the atonement away, and the mourner in Zion is left without the hope of comfort.

So far then is it from being true, that the mercy of God would have been ready to forgive the sinner without atonement, had justice allowed it; and that it would have been highly honoured by so doing, that the very existence of mercy can be proved only by the atonement. Remove that proof of it, and I may very safely challenge all the wisdom of human philosophy to prove that any such thing as mercy exists. I know not if this view of the matter be urged upon the attention of the Church, with sufficient frequency and prominence: but if it were, I can hardly think that so strange an objection to the atonement could ever have been conceived, as that which considers the atonement,—the only fact by which the very existence of mercy, and much more its infinite extent,



can be proved,—as a drawback upon the fulness and freeness of that mercy.

I need not dwell upon a remark, which however it is necessary that I should here make ; that if Christ did not die solely as our substitute ; if the imputation of our guilt was only partly the cause of his death ; if he was a fallen sinful man, and died of necessity because he was so, then the argument which we draw from the atonement, in proof of the boundless extent of the Divine mercy, in order to lead the mourning sinner to “ peace and joy in believing,” totally fails. The sinner, in such circumstances, it is well known, is peculiarly ingenious in finding out arguments against his title to embrace the salvation offered to him in the gospel. We can triumphantly repel every argument that his fears suggest, against his having ground to hope in the mercy of God, by referring to the cross of Christ. Let it be the cross of a fallen sinful man,—let the imputation of our guilt be only one of the causes that placed him there,—and it would require but a small portion of that argumentative skill which an awakened conscience never fails to supply, to neutralize, if not to annihilate every ground of comfort that we can draw from the cross. The death of one fallen sinful man is far enough from proving that God is infinite in mercy, and that all men however fallen and sinful they may be, may safely rely upon that mercy, nay, may “ come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” The death of a fallen sinful man could

never, by any possibility prove this. The death of Christ does prove it, else it is yet unproved, and our receiving of mercy and grace, instead of being so certain that they may be sought with all holy boldness, rests only upon a peradventure.

In order to give effect to the atonement, the free and voluntary consent of all the parties concerned is essentially necessary. If God do not consent to accept of the obedience and sufferings of a Mediator, as affording a more glorious display of the Divine perfections, and more solemnly confirming the principles of his moral government, than either our obedience or our death could have ever done, the obedience and sufferings of the Mediator can be of no avail; for God has an unquestionable right to determine whether he will forgive the sinner at all, and on what grounds he will do so. And this is the very ground of our reliance upon the atonement of Christ, that it was appointed by God himself: and that it was accomplished to the full extent that he required, was proved by his raising up of Christ and giving him glory. Not less necessary is the consent of the sinner. For if he declare, that while he seeks for eternal life, he will not accept of it as the free gift of God in Christ Jesus, but depends for his justification before God, in whole, or in part, upon something else than the atonement, all scripture—nay all reason—declares that he can have neither part nor lot in the matter. If the work of atonement be sufficient to reconcile us to God, and to

render the pardon of our sins compatible with his perfections, then nothing needs to be added, or can be added to that which is already perfect. And if his work be not perfectly sufficient for that purpose, it is vain, and worse than vain, to hope that we are capable of supplying the defect. The consent of the Mediator himself is also clearly necessary. If he were appointed to the sufferings which he endured, against his own will, and was dragged reluctantly to the altar, and was compelled to resign a life which he would have gladly retained, and to endure sufferings which he would have avoided, had it been in his power, then nobody, I suppose will maintain that sufferings thus inflicted could form any ground for his successful intercession, or in any way be rendered available for our good. If from the period of his appointment to his office, down to the period when he shall have fully accomplished the purposes for which he assumed it, there was one step which he did not voluntarily take,—one moment when he would have withdrawn from his work if he could, that one step, that one moment vitiates the whole proceeding, and destroys the ground of our reliance upon it. For that is a step,—a moment—with regard to which, instead of looking on the travail of his soul and being satisfied, he must regard as subjecting his soul to a travail which he did not expect, and which, had he anticipated it, would have prevented him from undertaking the work at all. His consent was consequently given, under a mitigated and mistaken view of what

would be required of him ;—a consent which, had he foreseen that step,—that moment—he never would have given. Can we believe this of Christ ? Can we suppose that when he consented to take our iniquities upon him, he had not a clear and most distinct view of the whole extent of suffering to which his undertaking subjected him ? Or can we suppose that even during the most agonizing moments of his course, he regretted, that is, virtually cancelled the consent which he had given, to undertake it ? If so, then at that moment the benefits which we derive from him, supposing we could in such a case, derive any benefits from him, were not the free gifts of his grace, but were forcibly wrung from a reluctant and unwilling benefactor.<sup>1</sup>

Christ then voluntarily consented to be made sin for us ; and he gave that consent with a distinct view of all the sufferings to which it would expose him ; and the most agonizing of these sufferings never once induced him to withdraw that consent, by making him express or feel a wish that he had withheld it. Now this is one of the considerations that lead most directly to the proof of his divinity. Supposing him to have been a mere creature, then either he was a creature, created originally for a different purpose, but was induced to consent to undertake the work of man's redemption ; or he was a creature created originally for that express purpose. In neither case could he have

<sup>1</sup> See note F. Appendix.

given that consent which is essential to the validity of atonement. If he was originally created for a different purpose, then we must admit a want of prescience in God. He created this being for one purpose, but afterwards found it necessary to alter this creature's destination, and employ him for a different purpose. But in this alteration of his destination, he, as a creature, totally dependant upon God, could have no consent either to give, or to withhold. But let us take the very highest idea of him, that has been, or that can be framed, by those who deny his divinity. Let us suppose him to be a Super-angelic Spirit, created for the express purpose of manifesting the glory of God, in the work of redemption. It is plain that he could not in this case, any more than in the former, give that voluntary consent to being appointed to make atonement, without which atonement is a nullity. For if he was a creature—a super-angelic creature, created specifically for the purpose of becoming incarnate and making atonement, then it is clear that he was appointed to this work and to all the labours and sufferings which it imposed upon him, before he had a being at all, and consequently before he was capable of either giving or withholding his consent. To say then, that Christ was a mere creature, even making him the very highest of all created beings, is effectually to deny the atonement.

It must also be observed, that if he became, in his Incarnation, a fallen sinful man, it does not



follow indeed that he withdrew his consent to endure all the sufferings which his undertaking imposed upon him, but we have no evidence that he did not, and we have strong ground for thinking that he did. And upon a point of such fundamental importance, it is surely necessary that we should have evidence of the most indisputable kind. And such evidence, I shall in the sequel have occasion to shew, we have in abundance. I merely remark here in passing, that if Christ became a fallen sinful man, then he became a man as liable to death, as unable to avoid or resist it, as any other man,—an opinion that is openly and strenuously maintained, as of plain necessity it must, by those who say that Christ was fallen and sinful. He was then bound to die by two different obligations,—by that voluntary consent to become obedient unto death, without which his death could be no atonement,—and also by that personal constitution which rendered his death unavoidable, whether he had been under any covenant obligation to die or not. Now it is obvious that the existence of the latter of these obligations, altogether obscures the evidence of the former, by shewing that he must have died though that obligation had never existed. It is of the utmost importance for us to know, that though every step of the painful process through which he passed, the benefits derived to us by his sufferings, were not by constraint wrung from him, but willingly purchased for us,—that he was not bound down to endurance by the iron chain of his own fallen and

sinful personal constitution, but by the golden chain of that love to God whose glorious perfections he was manifesting to the universe, and of that love to men through whose salvation he was making the manifestation, which no waters could quench, and no floods could drown. For aught that we can tell, that love was effectually quenched; and in the intensity of his sufferings, he regretted that he had ever undertaken to bear them, and would have escaped from them, had he not, as if distrusting his own resolution, placed himself in a situation which rendered escape impossible. For aught that we know, the reproach cast upon him on the cross was true—"He saved others, himself he cannot save." It may be that the insulting challenge, "Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe," was a challenge which he declined, from total inability, through personal weakness, to meet it. And if so, what becomes of the atonement?

I may here notice what is often said as to the bearing of the atonement. It is said that as God is unchangeable, atonement therefore can have no bearing upon him. If therefore it have any bearing at all, it must be upon us. If the Church taught that the great, and indeed only object of atonement is to render God willing to forgive the sinner, then the remark would be perfectly correct. But the Church teaches no such doctrine; nor have I met with it any where, save in the writings of Socinians, who very often represent the doctrine of the Church

in this manner, that they may be able to overthrow it ; a task which they would find not quite so easy, if they would take the trouble to acquaint themselves with what it is that the Church really believes upon the subject. If indeed it could be said with truth of any of the offices of Christ, that it bears not upon men at all, but solely upon God, it is of his Priesthood that the remark would be made. The bearing of the other offices upon us, is palpable. As a Prophet he enlightens us ; as a King he subdues us to himself, rules, and defends us ; and what more do we want ? or what is left for the Priesthood to accomplish ? If then the Priesthood can have no bearing upon God who is unchangeable, and is unnecessary to us who are renewed without it, there seems to be no room for it whatever. This mode of reasoning has often been employed against the doctrine of atonement. And were the atonement that which the Socinian makes it, when he attempts to refute it, a means of rendering God willing to forgive, the reasoning would be good. But the Priesthood has an essential bearing upon us. It cancels the sentence of condemnation, and of aliens and enemies, makes us children of God ; placing us in that situation in which we must of necessity be, before any grace whatever can be conferred upon us. But in changing the relation in which we stand toward God, it has as distinct a bearing upon him as upon us. It is not indeed requisite in order to render him willing to forgive ; but as “ God cannot deny

himself," it is requisite in order to render forgiveness compatible with his own perfections, and the interests of the universe : and if therefore it do not bear upon the whole character of God, upon every perfection of his nature, and upon every principle of his moral government, then it has failed in attaining its object. When atonement, in this view of it, is shewn to be unnecessary ; and when it is shewn what possible purpose such a being as man can possibly serve in the government of God, without such an atonement, it may be necessary to enter into a more minute consideration of the bearing of the atonement. But as long as the opponents of the doctrine hunt a phantom of their own formation, they may be allowed to pursue it without molestation, as the Catholic doctrine is not at all concerned in the result of the chase.

So far then it appears certain that Christ was a Priest, and that his death was truly an atonement ; for he suffered for no sin of his own ; yet he did die for sin ; " For the iniquities of my people was he smitten." His death then was the penalty due to our sins, for on no other ground can it be reconciled with justice. And as the justice of God demanded the death of Christ, when he took our iniquities upon him, so the mercy of God no less imperiously demanded his death, because without it, the very existence of mercy could never have been proved. It appears too that the efficacy of the atonement may be securely relied upon, because it was appointed by God, and its accomplishment rewarded by him ; and

also because it was voluntarily undertaken by Christ, and voluntarily carried on by him through its every step. The consent of the sinner alone therefore is necessary to enable him to reap all the benefits of atonement.

Having mentioned one of the necessary qualifications of Christ, for the making of an atonement, that he could undertake it with his own voluntary consent, and a consent given with a clear view of all the sufferings to the endurance of which his undertaking would expose him,—a consent without which his sufferings could have had no atoning efficacy, and a consent which, had he been a mere creature, however exalted, he never could by any possibility have given—I cannot choose a better place for noticing some other qualifications that were necessary, to enable him to make an atonement for our sins.

It was essentially necessary to the accomplishment of the atonement, that he who undertook it should be God. Without being Divine, our great High Priest could have been only such a Priest as were those under the law, and he could have offered no more effectual a sacrifice than they did. His Divinity was necessary not merely to enable him to give that voluntary consent to his appointment, without which his death could have been no atonement; but was no less necessary in order to furnish him with an offering. “It is of necessity that he should have somewhat to offer.” One, among many reasons, why the sacrifices under the law were of no avail to



the taking away of sin, was, that the animals offered were already as completely the property of God, as they could be made, by being presented to him in sacrifice. “ I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds ; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains ; and the wild beasts of the field are mine.” And had our Saviour not been God, his sacrifice must have obviously laboured under the same defect. He could not have said, of that life which he gave for a lost world, what no created being can say, “ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself ; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” This, I say, is what no created being could ever say ; for the highest of created beings has received his life from God, holds it in dependence upon God, and has no authority whatever to lay it down. But Christ in giving his life for that of the world, was giving that which was strictly and properly his own, that which he assumed at his own pleasure, that which could be demanded from him by no law, and that which could be wrung from him by no power ; but was assailed in vain by death, and him that had the power of death. In laying down his life for his sheep, therefore, he was laying down that which was entirely his own,—his own in such a way as no creature ever did, or by any possibility ever can call his life his own ; and which he had consequently the most indisputable right to dispose of as he pleased.

But it is obvious that our Saviour's Sacrifice altogether wanted that indispensable characteristic of an acceptable and efficacious sacrifice, that it should be offered by him who can say that it is his own, and that he has an unquestionable right to offer it, if we suppose that Christ was a fallen and sinful man. For then he had no more control over his own life, than we have over ours ; and could not say that he had power to lay down that which, in reality, he had no power to retain ; but which he must give up, whether he pleased or not. To maintain, then, that Christ was a fallen sinful man, is most clearly and directly to deny the Atonement ; for it is to deny that he had any right to dispose of that life which he gave for the world. This matter will require a more extended consideration, at a more advanced period of our discussion ; but the remarks just made are, I think, sufficient to show that Christ was neither a mere creature, nor, as to his manhood, fallen and sinful.

In order to make the atonement, it was not less necessary that he should be truly Man, than that he should be truly God. Had he not been truly man, then the serpent's head could not have been bruised by the ' woman's seed.' Had he not been truly man, by whom our foe was conquered, then, as Irenæus remarks, our foe had not been fairly overcome, for as " by man came death," even so was it necessary, that by man should come " the resurrection from the dead." Again, the atonement was to be made by

suffering. But the Divinity cannot suffer. It was necessary therefore, that the Son should assume, and assume into such union with himself, a nature capable of suffering, as would render his sufferings in that nature his own sufferings, just as certainly as his Divine personality is his own ; so that the Scriptures speak of God purchasing the Church with his own blood, and of the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory. It was necessary also that the atonement should be made by him who was truly man, not only because it was man that was to be redeemed, but because man is the only rational being who is capable of suffering without personal guilt. Had Christ assumed the angelic nature, in order in that nature to have manifested the perfections of God, he could, in that nature have endured no other death than spiritual death, which is identical with sin. But assuming a human nature, he could, by an exercise of Divine power die, without doing, and without knowing sin. Moreover it was necessary that he should be man, and should make the atonement, from which all the rational families of God were to learn wisdom, in that nature which is at present the lowest of rational natures, but which, from its uniting of the only two substances of which we have any knowledge, matter and spirit, in its composition, is capable of becoming the most perfect of created natures ; for had the atonement been made in a higher nature, that knowledge of God, which it alone can give, would have been unknown to man, one of the rational families

of God. And had it been made for fallen spirits alone, it might have been doubted whether it could descend so low as to us. Thus had the atonement been made in a higher nature than that of man, the lessons taught by it would have been neither so extensively, nor so impressively taught. This subject also however, will require more particular notice hereafter. In the mean time it seems sufficiently plain, that he who made the atonement must of necessity be man.

It was also necessary that he who made atonement for the sins of men, should himself be perfectly holy. Under the law, no person could be found possessed of this perfect holiness: but the utmost care was taken to render the Levitical high-priest, as far as possible, a striking type of Christ in this respect. He was required to be perfectly free from all bodily defect and deformity. He was to be born of a mother who had been, not a widow, but a virgin, when married to his father. He was consecrated to his office by ceremonies of the most solemn kind. He wore upon his forehead a golden plate, on which was graven, "like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD." He was not permitted, like other men, to mourn for those that died, nor to contract any ceremonial uncleanness, even for his father or his mother. And on the great day of atonement, when he entered into the sanctuary, he prepared himself for the solemnity, by offering first an atonement for himself. Thus the utmost degree of cere-

monial holiness was conferred upon him, that he might be a proper type of the immaculate holiness of our great High-Priest.

Now if all this ceremonial holiness was necessary in those priests who were only types of the great High-Priest, how much more necessary was all the reality of that holiness in our great High-Priest himself? If this ceremonial holiness was necessary in him who appeared before the Shechinah, how much more necessary was all the reality of that holiness in him who is the Shecinah? If the one was necessary in him who appeared only once in the year, in the earthly tabernacle, how much more necessary must the other be considered to be in him, who appears continually in the heavenly sanctuary to bless us, not once in the year, but always from thence? If such was the awful solemnity to be observed in passing, on one appointed day, into the holy of holies, how unspeakable the holiness of him, whose death rent asunder the veil that concealed that holy place from mortal eye, thus profaning the typical representation while he went into the reality, even into holy places not made with hands, there to appear before God for us?

Now it is not denied that Christ was perfectly immaculate; but it is maintained, at the same time, that he was fallen and sinful. The one of these positions appears to me to be a direct contradiction of the other. If the propensities of fallen man were in him, these propensities were in themselves, criminal



before God, entering into and unfitting him for the presence of God, until like the High-Priest under the law, he had first offered sacrifice for his own sins. And that he did redeem his own creature substance, is a tenet openly avowed by some of those who maintain that he was fallen and sinful. But if he who was fallen and sinful could redeem himself, I see not why we, who are also fallen and sinful, should not be able to redeem ourselves. If it be said that we have been guilty of actual sin, which he never was, I reply that still he was in the state of an infant, a fallen sinful creature, but without actual sin. If then, his death redeemed himself,—or his own creature substance, which was just as much himself, as his Divinity was himself—then, with regard to infants at least, we may affirm, that their death is a redemption of themselves. Now while I maintain the salvation of all infants, dying before actual sin, I deny that any one of them is, or can be saved by its own death, but only by the death of Christ. Besides, if the death of Christ, a fallen, sinful, but actually guiltless being, could redeem not only himself, but others also ; why should not the death of other fallen, sinful, but actually guiltless beings, be sufficient to redeem not only themselves, but others also ? And upon what principle can we find fault with those who offered to God their “ first-born for their transgression, and the fruit of their body, for the sins of their soul,” excepting that the infants themselves had not given their consent to the sacrifice ? If the sacrifice of one

fallen, sinful, but guiltless being, be sufficient to redeem the souls of others ; the sacrifice of another fallen, sinful, but guiltless being must have equal efficacy, unless some exception of this kind be taken ; an exception, be it remarked, which has no reference whatever to the personal constitution of the being excepted against,—a personal constitution which fits the fallen, sinful, but guiltless infant as effectually for either priest or sacrifice, as the fallen, sinful, but guiltless Saviour could be.

For it must be remarked that Christ was required to be holy, not merely as the Priest who offered the atoning sacrifice, but also as the Lamb which was offered. To offer to God that which was not perfect in its kind, was, even under the law, an offence of the most grievous nature. “Cursed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing : for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.” In this respect also the divinity was essentially necessary to our Lord, in order to give that dignity to his person, and that value to his sufferings, which they could not otherwise have possessed. His sufferings are available for our salvation, not simply as they are sufferings, but as they are the sufferings of the “Lord of glory ;” his blood cleanseth us from all sins, not simply as it is pure, and innocent, and holy blood, but as it is the blood of him who is “God over all, blessed for ever, Amen.” He was not divested of the divinity on the

cross, for he could not be divested of himself ; and his divinity was himself, as much as the humanity which suffered was himself. The Godhead in him was not separated from his Godhead properties, but, inseparably united to his own humanity, sustained it to endure what would have overwhelmed any other, until he could say, “ It is finished.” And this was what rendered his death an exhibition of the divine perfection, from which angels learn wisdom, that he who was “ bruised for our iniquities,” was not a man emptied of the divinity, and dying in consequence of the sinfulness of his flesh ; but was God purchasing his Church with “ his own blood.” As the sacrifice offered then, the divinity was not less essential to him, than it was essential to him as the Priest by whom the sacrifice was offered.

Both as the victim offered then, and as the Priest who offered it, it was necessary that Christ should possess all the perfection of holiness,—a holiness not resulting from a successful resistance of the motions of sin in the flesh, but a holiness resulting from the total absence of any such motions. For an inclination to sin, however successfully resisted, and however completely repressed from going forth into actual transgression, is itself criminal, and totally incompatible with the holiness of the “ Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” If such inclination was in Christ, then was he under the same necessity as the Levitical high-priest, to prepare himself for appearing before the Lord, by offering first

a sacrifice for his own sins. The holiness of him, therefore who, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God," was not a holiness that resulted from a successful repression of the sinful inclinations of the flesh, or from a successful overcoming of the renitency of the human will against the Divine will; but from the total absence of any such inclinations, or such renitency in the MAN anointed in the moment of conception, with all the plentitude of the Holy Ghost. Had he been in any manner, or to any degree involved in the guilt of men, he could not have substituted himself in the room of guilty men, but must have died for his own guilt.

Upon this subject I shall again avail myself of the language of Augustine. After stating that a sacrifice can be offered only to God, that it must be offered by a righteous and holy priest, that it must be accepted by those for whose sakes it is offered, and that it must be without blemish, he thus goes on—  
'Who then was so righteous and holy a priest as the only Son of God, who had no need to purge away his own sins, original or actual, by sacrifice? And what could be so properly taken from men, to be offered for them, as human flesh? And what so fit for this immolation as mortal flesh? And what so pure, for purifying the sins of mortal men, as flesh born in the womb, and from the womb of the virgin, without any contagion of carnal concupiscence? And what so grateful could be offered or received, as the flesh of our sacrifice, the prepared body of our Priest?

That as four things are considered in every sacrifice, to whom it is offered, by whom it is offered, what is offered, and for whom it is offered, the selfsame only and true Mediator, reconciling us to God by the sacrifice of peace, remained one with him to whom he offered, made one in himself of those for whom he offered, and was himself both the person who offered, and the thing offered.' <sup>1</sup>

Another part of the office of Christ as our Priest is to make intercession for us. All that I have to do at present is to shew, that Christ actually does intercede for us, and to notice one or two of the principal circumstances connected with that intercession. That he interceded for his people before his appearance in the flesh, is, I think, very distinctly shown in the first chapter of Zechariah. There it is written, "Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three-

<sup>1</sup> Quis ergo tam justus et sanctus sacerdos, quam unicus Filius Dei, qui non opus haberet per sacrificium sua purgare peccato, nec originalia, nec ex humana vita quæ adduntur? Et quid tam congruenter ab hominibus sumeretur quod pro eis offerretur, quam humana caro? Et quid tam aptum huic immolationi, quam caro mortalis? Et quid tam mundum pro mundandis vitiis mortalium, quam sine ulla contagione carnalis concupiscentiæ caro nata in utero et ex utero virginali? Et quid tam grate offerri et suscipi possit, quam caro sacrificii nostri, corpus effectum sacerdotis nostri? Ut quoniam quatuor considerantur in omni sacrificio, cui offeratur, a quo offeratur, quid offeratur, pro quibus offeratur, idem ipse unus verusque Mediator, per sacrificium pacis reconcilians nos Deo, unum cum illo maneret cui offerebat, unum in se faceret pro quibus offerebat, unus ipse esset qui offerebat, et quod offerebat.' *De Trinitate, Lib. 4, Cap. 14.*



score and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me, with good words, and comfortable words.” Now it requires no very nice attention to the structure of the prophecy from which this quotation is made, to shew, that the angel who is here represented as interceding for Judah and Jerusalem, and who was answered with good and comfortable words, was no other than the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is distinctly recognized as Jehovah. In this prophecy He is here stated very plainly to have exercised the office of intercessor, and to have exercised it with efficacy, long before his appearance in the flesh. That he exercised the same part of the priestly office while he was on earth, needs no proof to those who are in the habit of reading the Bible. We have there a most instructive specimen of his intercession for his people in general, in the seventeenth chapter of John, and we have also a proof of his intercession for every individual believer, in his declaration to Peter,—“I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not.” I do not stop just now to shew how clearly this proves him to have been a priest when he was on earth, but go on to remark that he continues to make intercession for his people now. Of this I can offer no more satisfactory proof than that which is furnished by the following texts of Scriptures: “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for

us.”<sup>1</sup> “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”<sup>2</sup>

With regard to this intercession I shall not inquire, whether he makes use of words, or only presents himself silently before God, as it were a “Lamb that had been slain;” neither shall I inquire whether actual prostration be employed in his intercession,—questions which I surely characterize very gently when I say that they are foolish. They have arisen, I suppose, from considering the intercession of Christ as having a reference solely to our prayers. Now it is certain that our prayers can find acceptance with God, only through the intercession of Christ. This is indeed acknowledged in our prayers, all of which we offer up in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and beg an answer to our prayers only for his sake. But every duty that we perform, every grace that we exercise, and every blessing that we receive, is as intimately connected with the intercession of our Mediator, as our prayers are. The very word intercession has received an improper and incorrect limitation, from its supposed exclusive connection with prayer. But the intercession of Christ just means that he stands between God and men, as the medium through whom alone every deed of man becomes acceptable to God, and every blessing that God confers upon man is conveyed. We are wrong if we suppose that any prayer can be heard, if we do

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vii. 25.

not offer it in the name of Christ ; but if we suppose that any work of righteousness that we do, can be accepted of God, or rewarded by him, if it be not wrought in the name of Christ, we are equally wrong. If we offer up any prayer to God, on the ground of our own righteousness, and desire to be heard because we deserve to be so, we are thus setting aside the intercession of Christ, and cannot by any possibility be heard. But if we work any deed of righteousness, which we hope will be accepted of God and rewarded by him, on account of its own excellence, we are equally setting aside the intercession of Christ, and are equally deceiving ourselves. “The ploughing of the wicked is sin.” And why? Just because the ungodliness of the principles upon which he acts, having no reference whatever to his dependance upon God, communicates its contamination even to his most indifferent actions. The prayers and alms of the Pharisee, though excellent deeds in themselves, are hateful in the sight of God, for they are performed without any regard to the authority of God, and without a reference to him for their reward. In the same way, not only the good deeds of the believer, but his most indifferent actions—derive their complexion from his general principles, and wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they become sacrifices of righteousness, accepted of, and rewarded by God, as expressions and fruits of faith in the Redeemer whom he hath provided. If then we do not recognize the intercession of our Lord Jesus

Christ in every deed of righteousness that we do, and in every grace that we exercise, and in every blessing that we receive,—if, in short, we confine our views of his intercession to our prayers alone, in which that intercession is distinctly and formally acknowledged, we are limiting our views, in a way that cannot fail to prove most injurious both to our progress in the Christian life, and to our enjoyment of spiritual pleasure.

While I think it of the utmost importance to inculcate upon my reader the fact, that for every step that he takes in the Christian life, he is indebted to the Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ,—that he can make no progress until he can say, “I live, nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me,” I hold it also important to remark, that the Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ must be always successful. What we ask in his name, believing, we shall, we must receive. Nothing can be more certain than this. He is the well-beloved Son, and what we ask for his sake, if it be agreeable to his will, cannot be denied. God requires us to hear him when he instructs us ; and can we suppose that God himself will refuse to hear him, when he calls upon his Father to fulfil those petitions which his instructions alone have taught us to offer ? His intercession must prevail, because in asking every blessing that the Gospel promises, in his name, we are asking nothing but that which we have a covenant right to ask. We deserve nothing, but Christ hath deserved all things ; and if

it be true, as I apprehend, it most clearly and certainly is, that our sins were imputed to Christ, and that his righteousness is imputed to us, then there is nothing that we may not ask. The terms of the covenant of salvation have already been fulfilled by our Divine representative, and whatever he deserved we may confidently ask ; for if the covenant has been fulfilled on our part, we may rest assured that it will not fail to be fulfilled on God's part. His faithfulness and justice are now pledged to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. When therefore we ask for all blessings, we ask only for that to which we have an undoubted right, if we be truly members of the body of Christ ; for in him all fulness dwells, and dwells just for our sakes, that "of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace."

It is the most delightful privilege of the Gospel, that the believer has at all times access to God, with the perfect certainty of being heard. His prayer is considered as being the prayer of Christ himself,—as in truth it is, for the salvation of the believer is the glory of Christ,—and it rises to the throne of grace with all the efficacy which such a consideration can give it ; and is enforced with all the weight of his merits, and with all the sanctity of his peace-speaking blood. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have



the petitions that we desired of him.”<sup>1</sup> From this view of the matter, I think, two conclusions appear to be perfectly certain. The first is that a prayer offered up to God, without any reference to the Intercession of Christ, cannot by any possibility be granted; for this would be to prove that there is some other way of access to God, than through Christ Jesus, and that in fact his mediation is unnecessary. The next is, that a prayer offered up to God, with reference to, and dependence upon the Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, must, to an absolute certainty, be heard and answered. When Christ intercedes for us, our prayer must be granted; because he asks only what is agreeable to the will of the Father, and what therefore the Father has pleasure in granting. He asks only what he has paid for, and what therefore justice requires to be granted. He asks, as Mediator, only what, as God, he has the power and the privilege of bestowing, and what therefore must, most certainly, be bestowed. The prayer of faith, therefore, must prevail.

But both these positions, it will perhaps be said, are directly contradicted by well-established facts; and against facts there is no reasoning. A slight examination however will, I apprehend, be sufficient to shew that this is not the case. With regard to the first of these conclusions, that a prayer not offered in the name of Christ, cannot be granted, I need enter into no discussion; for they who “deny

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 14.

the Lord that bought them," may be presumed to be but little in the habit of praying at all. Spiritual blessings they cannot receive, for they depend not upon the Spirit of God, but upon their own exertions, for all the virtue that they hope to acquire. Temporal prosperity they may possess. But while the arrangements of providence render it necessary, that temporal good should be indiscriminately distributed, with little regard to moral character, prosperity is far from being always a blessing. "The prosperity of fools destroys them."

With regard to the other conclusion, that the prayer of faith, offered in the name of Christ, must be heard, I conceive nothing can be more derogatory to the Divine character, than to doubt it. The facts which seem to militate against this conclusion, may be satisfactorily accounted for by such considerations as the following. First, it must be recollected that the prayer even of a true Christian is not always a Christian prayer. I refer not to that coldness of heart, and deadness of affection, and poverty of expectation, and distrustful timidity which so often characterize our prayers ; but to that mere formality of which the Christian may occasionally be guilty. There may be a want of any exercise of faith in the prayers which we offer up. The name of Christ may be mentioned merely as a form, and without any real specific believing reference to, or reliance upon his Mediation. Now, we cannot hope that he is to adopt as his own, and enforce with all the efficacy

of his Intercession, a prayer which we are offering up in a way which clearly indicates to his all-seeing eye, that we are taking no interest in, and feeling no anxiety about the matter, but are praying in mere formality.

Again, we may have offered up our prayer in faith, but we may then have gone away and forgotten it. But if we wish to have our petitions granted, we must not only pray, but we must also "look up," waiting for and expecting an answer. If we have engaged some person to intercede for us with some great man from whom we expect a favour, we wait with the most anxious expectation to learn the result of the application. But if when we have applied to God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we go away, and think no more about the matter, nor make use of the means which he may actually be putting into our hands, for the very purpose of enabling us to obtain the blessing that we desired, then no doubt our prayer fails; yet is it not the less true that the prayer of faith fails not. Our petition may have been heard, while our subsequent carelessness has thrown away the blessing.

Farther, we may often pray for things the possession of which would prove really hurtful to us, and the denial of which things therefore, is the most gracious answer to our prayer. God alone can tell what is really good for us, and graciously reserves to himself the prerogative of determining whether the petitions which we offer be fit to be granted.

“Me have ye bereaved of my children, said the mourning patriarch, Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.” Nay, Jacob ! but these are the steps whereby God is providing a place, where thou and thine may be satisfied in the days of famine. How often does the wayward child struggle and cry, while the tenderest hand is performing offices essentially necessary for its health and comfort ! And how often are we, in the hands of God, very wayward children, fretting and murmuring at that which is necessary for our spiritual health and comfort ! God may therefore often deny our petitions, because he sees that to grant them would be detrimental to us. But in this case there is no reason to doubt, that he will always give us a blessing more appropriate to our situation, and of greater value, than that which he has refused. In this case then, though our petition be denied, yet the prayer of faith is not in vain. A beloved child may ask an indulgent father for something, which the father sees would be hurtful. This therefore he refuses ; and the child who knows both that his father is wiser than he and knows much better what is good for him, and also that he is so good that he will refuse him nothing that is really good for him, will rest perfectly satisfied with the decision.

One or two objections to the doctrine of Christ’s intercession, may deserve a passing notice. It is said, if the Father himself loveth us, as our Lord declares, then there can be no need of any intercessor

to induce him to grant all necessary blessings to those whom he himself loves. It is also said that if, as we maintain, God has actually decreed to confer upon the believer every thing necessary to fit him for the kingdom of heaven, and to bring him into it, then can we want no intercessor to obtain for us those blessings. These objections, if they have any validity, must put an end not merely to the doctrine of Christ's intercession, but to the propriety of any prayers on our part. For, on the principle on which they are founded, we must say, that it is useless to make known our wants and desires to God, who knows what things we have need of before we ask him, and better than we can know, and who is abundantly disposed to supply all our wants. God has indeed determined to give all necessary blessings to the believer ; but he has also determined to give them only through the mediation of his own Son. And surely it argues no defect of love on the part of God, that in order to render our salvation compatible with the interests of the universe, and the blessings appointed for us perfectly secured to us, he has appointed his own Son to be the medium through whom our desires may be addressed to him, and his blessings conveyed to us.

There is one objection however which, if it can be established, will effectually destroy the doctrine of the intercession, and remove all the comfort that we derive from the thought, that when we approach God in prayer, we are sure to be heard, because we



are introduced to him by the Son of his love. If Christ was not a Priest when he died, then his death was no atonement ; and the atonement denied, the whole foundation of his intercession is removed. But if I have succeeded in shewing the necessity and the reality of the atonement, then the certainty and the prevalence of his intercession, necessarily follows. It must be farther remarked, that as a fallen sinful, but regenerated man was totally unfit to make atonement ; even so such a man could give us no security in the character of intercessor. For if one fallen sinful, but regenerated man can effectually intercede for us with God, then why should not another man of the same character perform for us the same service ? Or rather why should any regenerated man place any reliance whatever upon another man, who is exactly in his own situation, fallen, sinful, but regenerated ? It is useless to say that his intercession avails, because he was appointed by God to the office of intercessor ; for if he was not a Priest while he was on earth, if he became a priest only by virtue of his resurrection, then he has no such appointment that we know of ; and moreover without the atonement, there is no ground laid for his intercession, which is just the constant application of the benefits of the atonement. And as little can it avail to say, that his intercession may be relied upon, because he is God as well as man ; for they who maintain that he was a fallen sinful man, maintain also, that in him the divinity was quiescent, was self-suspended,

was limited ; in other words was a non-entity. It is declared that in him the Godhead person was separated from Godhead properties. Now I would remark not only that if this separation existed while Christ was on earth, his intercession can have no place, for he could lay no effectual ground for it ; but I would remark farther, that if this separation be possible at any time, then it is perfectly clear that there is no such being as God at all. If God can, at any time, or under any circumstances, cease to be “ Infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth,” then he never could possess these characteristics at any time,—that is, he never existed. And if Christ be God as well as man, then that was his character when he was on earth as certainly as it is so now. And if this was not his character when he was on earth,—if he had divested himself of these, the essential characteristics of Godhead, then not only do atonement and intercession fail ; but he was not God then, he cannot be so now, nor can there be a God at all, if he is capable of being separated from his Godhead properties.

Such are some of the results of the system that teaches us to believe that our Lord’s humanity was fallen, sinful humanity ; results not drawn from that system by remote and dubious deduction, nor wrung out of it, by torturing it into conclusions which would not readily suggest themselves to the supporters of that system ; but results directly and unavoidably

springing from what they expressly avow. For the quiescence, the suspension, the limitation of the Godhead in Christ is openly avowed. And this is much worse than maintaining that he was a mere man: for they who maintain that he was a mere man, yet leave untouched the principles by which the existence of God is proved. But if we believe that in Christ the Godhead was quiescent, suspended, limited, we may continue to believe, if we please, that there is a God; but our belief is perfectly gratuitous; we have swept away every ground upon which his being can be proved; we have left ourselves no defence against the arguments of him who denies that there is a God; for a Godhead that is capable of quiescence, suspension, and limitation, is plainly no Godhead at all. At least so thought Elijah, when, deriding the divinity of Baal, he said to the priests, "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."<sup>1</sup>

Christ, then was really and truly a Priest, an unfallen and sinless Priest. He had a life which was strictly his own, which he could by no law be required either to assume, or to lay down; a life which in this respect differed essentially from the life of every created being; for no created being assumes life, but receives it at the will of God, without the possibility of giving his own previous consent to its reception, and without the possibility of having

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 27.

or of acquiring any right to dispose of that life as he pleases. Christ thus having a human life differing from the life of every created being, had power to lay it down at his own pleasure, and in any manner that he might think proper. He did lay it down, and his death was really and truly an atonement. It was the payment of our debt, the ransom of our redemption, the endurance of our penalty, the price by which we were purchased, the removal of the wrath of God from us, by its transference to our substitute. This atonement was demanded by all the attributes of the Divine character, all of which are gloriously illustrated by it. It was demanded by the interests of all the rational family of God, which would have been involved in dismay and in ruin, had sin been pardoned without that proof of its unalterable hatefulness in the sight of God, which the atonement alone could furnish. The justice and mercy of God are the attributes most commonly brought into view when speaking of the atonement; of the former of which it is said, that God might very justly have departed from his right to punish, and the latter would have been much better displayed, by the absence of any atonement. It has been shewn that such a statement results from a total misapprehension of the nature of atonement;—that justice did imperiously demand it; and that without it, the very existence of such an attribute as mercy in God, is totally unsusceptible of any satisfactory proof. By the atonement, Christ has laid a ground for an intercession which must

always be effectual, so that the prayer of faith offered unto God through him, can never fail to be heard. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."<sup>1</sup> We have seen also at every step, how utterly ruinous to the Priesthood of our Lord, and to all the hopes that we found upon it, and to all the comfort that we draw from it, is the system which maintains that he was a fallen, sinful man, and entered upon the Priesthood only in consequence of his resurrection from the dead. I proceed now to mention some of the duties which we owe to Christ as our High-Priest.

The most important duty, and that which we most clearly and obviously owe to our great High-Priest, is to renounce every self-righteous thought, and every self-dependent feeling, and account the pardon of our sins, and eternal life as solely the free gift of God through him. That we can be justified by any deeds of the law, or by any works of righteousness, is a notion so often and directly denied in Scripture,—is so utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of atonement and is so clearly repugnant to right reason, that it is matter of wonder that any man, and especially men believing the Scriptures to be the word of God, could ever for a moment adopt such a notion. That every deed of righteousness that we do, is not one of the causes, but one of the effects of our justi-

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews ix. 24.



fication, is a truth of the very utmost importance ; and a truth which may perhaps be most satisfactorily proved by considering some of the most common objections that are opposed to it.

It has been objected to the doctrine that we are justified solely by the atonement made by Christ, that no necessary connection can be discovered between the pardon of a guilty person, and the death of an innocent one ; nor can any one explain how the latter can be the cause of the former. To this it has been answered,—and the answer is a complete counterpoise to the objection,—that there is just as little connection, that we can see, between pardon and repentance, or between pardon and anything else that may be considered as its cause, as between pardon and atonement. If it be said that this reply is calculated rather to silence the objector than to remove the objection, it may be farther remarked, that both the objection and the answer are particular instances of a universal truth, which is, that no necessary connection is discoverable by us between any two events, which, nevertheless, we are accustomed to consider as cause and effect. And if no such connection be discoverable in any case, then it can form no objection to the doctrine of atonement, that such a connection is not discoverable in it. It may also be observed, that the will of God has established a connection between the atonement of Christ, and the pardon of the believer ; and what, besides the *fiat* of the Almighty, is requisite to

establish a connection between any two things? or what else has made any one thing in the universe to be the cause of any other thing? Fire consumes what is submitted to its action. Is this a power residing in the element itself, which has not been conferred upon it by God, nor can be suspended at his pleasure? No man, who admits the being of God, will pretend to say this. And if, even in physical things, the will of God be allowed to be the sole ground of the connection between cause and effect, much more clearly must the same admission be made with regard to the pardon of sin. If a man has been offended, he may prescribe what terms he pleases, as the condition of pardoning the offence; and surely we cannot reasonably deny to God a privilege which we allow that every man possesses. It is true that a man may prescribe terms that are foolish and unreasonable, a supposition which we cannot for a moment admit, with regard to God. If, therefore, we could see no reason why the pardon of sin is communicated through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ Jesus,—if we could see no necessity for atonement whatever, yet when the fact is revealed to us by God, that we can be pardoned only through a crucified Redeemer; it would become us, as offending creatures, depending altogether on the mercy of God, to receive the annunciation with all humility and gratitude. Even in this case, it would be most irrational to object to it. But when God has graciously permitted us to see, in part at least, the absolute

necessity of atonement, and some of the important moral purposes answered by it, it is worse than foolish, it is the very perfection of rationalism, to find fault with this method of communicating pardon ; and to say, that if we cannot be permitted to purchase our own pardon, instead of receiving it as the free gift of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, we will not accept of it at all. Nothing, I conceive, can more effectually, or more justly subject a man to condemnation, than to say that he does not see the wisdom of the medium through which God is pleased to communicate the pardon of sin, and rather than ask for it through that medium, he will not accept of it at all.

When it is said that God is willing to pardon us upon our repentance, without any atonement, it is taken for granted that we can repent when we please. For if repentance be something entirely out of our power, then it can afford us no comfort to tell us, even if it were true, that repentance will purchase our pardon. For, besides that it seems just as difficult to perceive the connection between repentance and pardon, as to perceive the connection between atonement and pardon, I know not that even the most determined rationalism, has ever promulgated a tenet more clearly absurd, or more decidedly opposed to all experience, than the tenet that a man can repent of himself, without being led to do so, and enabled to do so, by the Holy Spirit. Many a sinner is no doubt soothing himself to peace by the promise of a

future repentance. But he neither knows as yet what repentance is, nor his own need of repentance, else he would build himself up in no such foolish delusion. For what does the sinner do, when he promises himself a future repentance? He just says, to-day, nothing shall induce me to abstain from indulging every appetite and every desire, nothing shall lead me to think of God at all, or to think of him without dread and aversion; nothing can make me delight to contemplate his perfections, or find any pleasure in drawing near to him: to-morrow, I will sit down and mourn, in the utmost anguish of spirit, those indulgences from which nothing shall induce me to-day to abstain, and wish a thousand times that I had never yielded to them; nothing shall give me such delight as the contemplation of these glorious perfections which, to-day I hate to think of; and I shall account nothing such a privilege as to draw near to that throne of grace, before which nothing shall induce me, to-day, to bend the knee. This is exactly what the sinner says, when he promises himself a future repentance. He promises that to-morrow he will hate with the most cordial detestation, that to which, to-day, he clings with the most ardent affection. He who says, to-day I am bowed down with all the weight of threescore years and ten, but to-morrow I am resolved that I shall flourish in all the vigour of unbroken youth, forms a resolution quite as rational, and quite as much within his power to accomplish, as he who says to-morrow I will repent.



He who says, I will make to myself a new heaven and a new earth, makes a promise just as much within his power to accomplish, as he who says, I will make to myself a new heart and a new spirit. Repentance and renovation are not sacrifices which we give to God, as the price of our justification ; but gifts which God bestows upon us, and which God only can bestow, in consequence of our having been freely justified. That man has surely little reason to lay claim to the appellation of rational, who goes so directly in the face of common sense and of all experience, as to teach the sinner that he is capable of repenting, and that repentance will purchase his pardon ; a tenet which whether it be more deplorably absurd, or more fearfully fatal, I shall not take upon me to determine. He who is brought truly to see his need of repentance, neither fancies that he can repent of himself, nor defer to to-morrow his seeking of repentance from God.

I have already noticed, and may notice again, the objection which says, that the doctrine of atonement represents God as a sanguinary and vengeful being, who, having once acquired a right to gratify his thirst of blood on the human race, refused to forego his claim till a nobler victim was offered in their stead. This objection, though often urged, and dwelt upon by the new theology with many a pathetic, and many a tragic exclamation, is probably brought forward rather for the purpose of perplexing, than from any weight that even they who make it, can suppose it



to possess ; and were it not that as some are weak enough to make it, others may perhaps be weak enough to be influenced by it, it would be altogether unworthy of any answer. They who make it know, or at least ought to know, that we who maintain the doctrine of atonement, actually do not consider God as a sanguinary being, any more than they do. On the contrary we consider him as a God of love, and we consider the atonement as a proof of love so great, that no language can do it justice. Had he been of a sanguinary or cruel nature, he would not have provided a ransom for us, and especially such a ransom as the blood of his own well-beloved Son. It was the love of God that laid our help upon one that is mighty to save ; that gave up his Son to death for us ; that sustained him throughout the whole of his work of redemption ; that “ raised him up and gave him glory, that our faith and our hope might be in God.” He communicated pardon through atonement, not because he delights in blood, but because in no other way could it be communicated, without producing the most fatal consequences. They therefore who believe the atonement, when they see the absolute necessity of it, and the many important moral purposes answered by it, are very far indeed from considering it as a proof of any thing vindictive in the divine character, but consider it as a proof of exactly the contrary ; and are well disposed to adopt the language of the Apostle, that “ it *became* him, for whom are all things, and by

whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

But the grand objection to the doctrine of atonement is, that it is hostile to the interests of morality. It is said, that to tell a man that he is justified, not by his obedience to the law of God, but solely by the merits of our great High Priest, is to cut the very sinews of exertion ; to place a pillow beneath the head of the sluggard ; to spread a couch for the repose of indolence ; to take away the most powerful motives to diligence in doing good, and to steadfastness in resisting temptation. It is very natural, say such objectors, for a man to reason thus—As my justification depends not at all on my own holiness, therefore it is unnecessary for me to put myself to the pain and trouble of cultivating holiness. I need take no care, since I have a sufficient surety to answer for all my failures. That some men should be found who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, is what any one acquainted with human nature, would be prepared to expect ;—and that there are men who reason in this manner, I am far from being disposed to deny. But the Gospel is not responsible for the errors of those who pervert it to their own destruction ; and did I conceive that the view of atonement held by the church, and which I have endeavoured to state, afforded the slightest ground for such reasoning, or were in any way hostile to the interests of morality, I trust I should not be the last to

renounce that view, however reluctantly. For I conceive that no truth is more certain, than that the promotion of holiness, is the great end of all that Christ has done and suffered for us,—that to raise man from his state of moral weakness and degradation, and to lead him to the perfection of his moral nature is the grand purpose, as far as we are concerned, for which the great plan of our redemption was devised, and carried into execution. But the atonement is not only not hostile to this purpose, but furnishes the only means by which it can be accomplished. Indeed the reasoning of those who say, that if our holiness do not justify us, it is therefore unnecessary, hardly needs a refutation ; since it involves two very obvious errors, viz :—that justification is all that is essentially necessary in our salvation, and, consequently, what does not promote that can be of no use,—and that the only adequate motive to the cultivation of holiness, is the dread of condemnation ; since, if that be removed, there remains, it seems, no longer any motive to its cultivation. Now, if men will adopt reasoning that involves such palpable errors, there does not appear to be a possibility of stating any doctrine, in terms so plain that they will not misunderstand it. If a man will make no exertion whatever, then, no doubt, a cobweb will bind him ; and surely he must be incapable of making any exertion, who is bound by such a cobweb as this reasoning ; and who does not see, that though our holiness does not, and cannot justify us, it may be

essentially necessary notwithstanding ; and that though the abyss of woe were shut up, and its fires extinguished, and the undying worm were dead, yet neither the number nor the influence of the motives which urge the believer on to the cultivation of holiness, would be in the slightest degree diminished. He who can adopt such a view of the doctrine of atonement, as held by the church, has little pretension to set himself up, as an improver of received Christianity, since it shews such a grossness of intellect, and such a destitution of moral feeling, as exhibits, if not to himself, at least to others, a powerful proof of the necessity of having the understanding enlightened, and the heart renewed from above.

That the doctrine of atonement tends to diminish our veneration for the law of God, and to abate our dread of sin, can be supposed only by those who do not understand it. It will be granted that religion consists in regarding our Maker with all those feelings which his perfections are calculated to inspire ; or, as the sacred writers emphatically call it, having the “ heart right with God.” To believe in the being of God, is the first article in religion ; and to know his nature is the first step toward religious perfection. Consequently, whatever tends most effectually to instruct us as to the character of God, and most deeply to impress upon our hearts a sense of his glorious perfections, must also most effectually tend to produce holiness, by impressing us with the deepest veneration, and the warmest love for him who

unites in his character all that is venerable, and all that is lovely. Now, which of the two has the clearest and most impressive view of the divine character, he who believes in the atonement, or he who considers it as unnecessary? In the death of Christ, viewed as a sacrifice for sin, the one sees the holiness of God, and the “exceeding sinfulness of sin” so awfully displayed, that, were he asked if he knew of any thing, that could display it more strongly, or convince him of it more deeply, he would reply, that he could not form the most distant conception of any thing that could display it in a manner half so striking,—that not even the destruction of the whole human race could, in so awful and impressive a manner, manifest the holiness of God, and the utter and inconceivable hatefulness of sin, as the humiliation and death of the Son of God. He deeply feels the force of the exhortation which says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy;” and he feels also the force of the reason given, why we should pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, namely, that, we “were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation, received by tradition from our fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.”<sup>1</sup> In the death of Christ the other sees no such sacrifice, nor any manifestation whatever of the holiness of God, or of the evil of sin; and he would tell us that the Deluge, the des-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter i. 16.



truction of Sodom, or the final perdition of any one human being, is, beyond all comparison, a much more awful proof of the hatefulness of sin, than the death of Christ. Is it possible then, that the latter can have as deep and impressive a view of the holiness God, as the former ; or have his heart so effectually aroused to a dread of sin, and a sense of its malignity ? Can he enter at all into the feelings which make even angels veil their faces with their wings, when they minister before the throne of God, and contemplate his holiness ? or into the feelings of the people when they cried, “ Who can stand before this holy Lord God ? ” or into that sense of the meanness, and worthlessness, and imperfection of the highest human excellence, when brought into comparison with that which is divine, which made Job exclaim, “ Now mine eye seeth thee ; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes ? ” It is altogether impossible. As far, then, as veneration for God, and dread of sin enter into morality, so far the interests of morality are not injured, but inconceivably strengthened and promoted, by the doctrine of atonement.

Again, with regard to love to God, that important principle of morality, what can be so well calculated to awaken it, as a belief of the doctrine of atonement ? “ We love him because he first loved us ; ” and it is in the atonement that we witness the exhibition of a love ineffable and inconceivable. He who, awakened to a sense of his guilt, has felt himself ready to sink under its insupportable weight, and

has found safety and peace in the blood of the "Lamb that was slain," finds himself totally unable to express his sense of the mercy of God, in providing such a ransom for his offending creatures. He feels it to be a love that passeth all understanding. It is in the very God against whom he has rebelled, that he finds his help; and a life devoted to his service is the necessary consequence of that supreme gratitude and affection which have been implanted in his heart. Who will love God most? He who sees him providing a way by which pardon may be granted, while we are placed in a situation in which pardon was so difficult, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission?—or he who only considers him as pardoning, while there was no obstacle whatever to the granting of that pardon?

While, then, in the cross of Christ, all the perfections of God are clearly displayed, and every error into which we can fall with regard to his character, is corrected; while the holiness of God, his love to men, and the hatefulness of sin, are so awfully manifested, that foundation is laid upon which alone the principles of morality can ever be securely built. He who persuades himself that God is all mercy, and will never treat his creatures with severity, and thus encourages himself in his evil ways, will see in the cross a fearful proof, that unless we become new creatures in Christ Jesus, then "he that made us will have no mercy upon us,—he that formed us will shew us no favour." And he, on the contrary, whom

guilt has taught to look on God with terror and dismay, will have his slavish dread changed into filial veneration and love, when he sees God manifesting such love to the world, as to give up his Son to death for its ransom. It is here that apparent inconsistencies are reconciled, and apparent impossibilities are accomplished. The Justice and Truth of God are fully vindicated in the punishment of sin, while mercy triumphs in the salvation of the sinner. It is here alone that God can be just and yet justify the sinner. Here the unalterable sanctity of the law is most impressively manifested, and every motive that either hope or fear can supply to urge us to the cultivation of holiness, is exhibited with the most resistless force. It is by habitually turning his eye to the cross, which exhibits at once the perfection of mercy and of judgment, which unites all that is awful, with all that is encouraging, in the character of God, that the Christian is impressed with a veneration, which the attending proofs of mercy prevent from degenerating into despondency and servile dread ; and with a confidence of love, which is prevented by the accompanying proofs of holiness and justice, from swelling into a presumption which might produce security and carelessness.

And who treats the Law of God with the greatest respect,—he who considers its claims as so limited, that he is fully able to satisfy them ?—or he who considers it as so pure and so extensive, that he only looks forward to conformity to it, as the completion

of his salvation, and the perfection of his nature? he who considers every deed of righteousness which he performs, as so much of the labour accomplished, which is to purchase heaven for him, and for which he looks on God as his debtor?—or he who considers it as a new step gained in his progress to perfection, and a new ground of gratitude to God? In every view which can be taken of the subject, the law appears to be “made void,” not by the man who sets it aside as the ground of justification, because he has so high an idea of its sanctity, that he considers justification, and all the blessings connected with it, as so many means adopted to produce conformity to the law; but by him who considers it only as a means for attaining a farther end; and a means, too, which we are perfectly capable of employing. The end of the one is to be justified, and conformity to the law the means by which it is to be accomplished. The end of the other is to be renewed after the image of his Maker, in righteousness and true holiness; and justification is only one of the means by which that end is to be attained. The one obeys that he *may be* justified; the other obeys because he *has been* justified. Much has been forgiven him; therefore he loveth much. Upon what possible ground, then, can he who denies the atonement, and thus subverts every moral principle, triumph over him who adopts it? or talk of his regard for the interests of morality, after he has degraded holiness from its lofty situation as the very

end of our being, the end for which we were created and redeemed, into the rank of a means for the attainment of some farther and more important object? or how can he pretend that he is exalting the dignity of human nature, who contends for the debasing doctrine, that if the dread of punishment be removed, there is no longer any sufficient motive to the cultivation of holiness?

It is then the first and most sacred duty that we owe to Christ as our Priest, to consider the pardon of our sins as resulting solely from his work as our Priest,—as freely granted antecedently to any holiness that we do or can possess, and consequently as being in no sense, and to no degree, the effect of that holiness. And this belief, so far from being hostile to the interests of morality, affords the only ground upon which the principles of morality can be securely built; as it makes holiness not the means to some farther attainment, but the ultimate attainment, the final perfection of man; and as it not only furnishes the only effectual means for the successful cultivation of holiness,—a consideration into which I am not called upon here to enter—but sets before us motives for its cultivation of a more impressive urgency, than any thing else that we can conceive, possibly could do.

Another duty which we owe to Christ as our Priest, is to consider him as the **ONLY** Priest, through whom we can have access to God, or receive any blessing from him. While some who call themselves Chris-



tians, deny that Christ is a Priest at all, or at least deny that he was so till after his resurrection, and thus, I conceive, plough up the very foundations of Christianity; there are others who do the same thing as effectually, by maintaining that there are many Priests under the Christian dispensation. By some professing Christians, the ministers of the Gospel are very commonly called priests. There would be a less glaring impropriety in calling them prophets or kings. There is no minister who has the slightest pretension to be called a priest. He can offer for the sinner no sacrifice, without which he can be no priest; he can make no intercession for us, farther than one man may do for another. That his intercessions are more likely to be available than those of another man, I am most ready to admit, on the ground that he is appointed by the great Head of the Church, the great High-Priest of our profession, to perform this duty. But his intercession is totally different from that of Christ. He can intercede only through the medium of another intercessor; his intercession is not necessarily and certainly successful, for he cannot so frame his prayers, that they shall be certainly agreeable to the will of God, as his knowledge is limited; and he can offer no sacrifice which pledges the faithfulness and justice of God to grant whatever he may ask, as Christ has done.

Christ hath, "by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and if there can be no

more offering for sin, then there can be no other priest. If the death of Christ was perfectly sufficient for our justification, then nothing needs to be added to it ; and if it were not perfectly sufficient for that purpose, then it could not effect it in any degree ; for no idea can be more utterly absurd,—more totally unworthy of any serious refutation, than the supposition, that our own righteousness will justify us, as far as it goes, and that the righteousness of Christ will supply what is wanting in our own. He justifies us wholly, or he justifies us not at all. And our justification is complete and unalterable, before we can have any acceptable communion with God, or can receive any spiritual blessing from him. For God can grant no such blessings to the man who stands to him in the relation of an impenitent and unpardoned rebel. And if we possess justification at all, we possess it with a completeness to which no addition can be made ; for it is not a thing that admits of degrees. We must be perfectly justified, or we are not justified at all. Holiness admits of all possible degrees, and our sanctification is gradual, and is made to depend considerably on our own diligence ; but our justification is as perfect at the first moment of our being quickened from our death in trespasses and sins, as it will be when openly declared before an assembled world of men and of angels ; and is no more derived from our own exertions, than the atonement of Christ was derived from them. One man may very well be more per-

fectly sanctified than another ; but no one man can be more completely justified than another.

Now if that justification which admits of no degrees, which must be perfect, or exists not at all, which is equally possessed by all that possess it, be founded solely upon the atonement of our great High-Priest, then it follows very clearly, that there can be no other priest, and that the man who assumes the title of priest, or who professes to perform the office of a priest, is guilty of the most daring invasion of the prerogative of Christ. In this respect the Church of Rome is grievously guilty. But upon this subject, where it would be easier to write a volume than a page, I am not called to enter. Without, however, looking to the errors of others, I would urge upon my reader very seriously to consider, whether an error of the same kind do not exist in his own heart. Self-righteousness is not so much a speculative error embraced by an particular Church, as a practical error derived from the depravity of the heart, whatsoever may be the creed believed. There is always a tendency to substitute something in ourselves, in part at least, as the ground of that grace which can be derived from our great High-Priest alone, a tendency which manifests itself in a great variety of ways.

When the sinner becomes sensible of the danger of his state, and of his need of pardon, his first impulse naturally is, to recommend himself to the favour of God by the reformation of his conduct.

When he becomes sensible of the folly of this attempt, and of the impossibility of success ; when he becomes sensible that the pardon of sin could be purchased by the blood of Christ alone, that it has already been purchased by that blood, and cannot be purchased again, but must be sought only as the free gift of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus ; his next impulse is, that if he cannot recommend himself to the favour of God, but must seek it through the mediation of Christ, he must at least recommend himself to the favour of Christ, and render himself worthy of his mediation before applying for it. He feels the weight of his sins to be so great, that he is altogether unworthy that Christ should at all interest himself in his favour, and imagines that he must remove, or at least diminish that unworthiness, before he can venture to apply, or to hope for the mediation of Christ in his favour. Now it is perfectly easy to shew the folly of this notion,—to prove, that we are no more capable of recommending ourselves to the mediation of Christ, than we are capable of recommending ourselves to the favour of God without it. That we cannot first repent and sanctify ourselves, and then carry them to Christ as the price of his mediation ; but must go to him destitute of these, and of all spiritual good, that we may receive them from him ; and that nothing can be more irrational than to say, that we will of ourselves take the first and most difficult steps in the work of our own salvation, and then having suc-

cessfully begun that work ourselves, we will go to him to complete it :—all this it is very easy to prove ; but unhappily, against moral weakness and spiritual blindness, the clearest logic and the best-constructed arguments avail nothing ; and most believers have probably experienced in some degree this manifestation of a self-righteousness which far other means than logic and argument are necessary to subdue. And he in whom it has been subdued, while, on looking back he wonders that he ever could for a moment be influenced by such palpable delusions, at the same time feels, that, had it not been for the operation of the Holy Spirit, the spell would have been unbroken still, and no force of reasoning would have availed to convince him of the error of what he now sees to be so utterly foolish and irrational. Nothing can well be simpler than the truth that our sins can be forgiven us only through the blood of Christ,—that through that blood, God is perfectly ready to forgive them,—and that the more guilty we are, we have the less reason to delay our application, since not one spiritual gift can we receive, till we be first forgiven. But simple as all this is, and clearly as it is stated in Scripture, so deeply rooted is the feeling of self-righteousness, so dark our hearts, and so averse to believe the love which God hath to us, and so little disposed to rely on the grace of our High-Priest, that unless we be divinely taught these simple truths, we shall never learn them. “ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is



in him? Even so the things of God knoweth none save the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."<sup>1</sup>

One of the most insidious forms in which self-righteousness, and a distrust of our High Priest manifests itself, is in that of an apparently holy dissatisfaction with our own works, and our own prayers, and our own services. Now the Christian will never feel that he is entitled to look upon his own performances with aught of the feeling of self-complacency; and even when he has done his duty, and has reason to feel satisfied that he has been enabled to do it, still he will also feel that it becomes him to say, that he is an unprofitable servant, and has done what it was his duty to do; and, far from glorying before God, will admit that his best services require to be offered to God through the mediation of Christ, in order to be accepted. To the Christian, boasting is most effectually excluded; for every attainment in righteousness that he makes, and every deed of righteousness that he does, so far from making God his debtor, is nothing more than a new favour conferred upon him through the atonement, and renders him so much more deeply a debtor to divine

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, 14.

grace. But it sometimes happens that the Christian is so far from boasting of his services, that he goes as far wrong in an opposite direction,—as we are naturally more ready to overvalue than to undervalue ourselves ; this happens not often, it may be, but it does happen, and I have met with it. In this case the Christian,—for I have never met this insidious form of self-righteousness, excepting in cases where the evidences of genuine faith were of the most decisive kind—so far from looking back upon his services, with the satisfaction of thinking that he has been enabled to glorify God, looks upon them, not only with dissatisfaction because they have not been so perfect as they might have been, but with a feeling of distress ; for he now sees distinctly how he could have rendered the service more perfect. He dwells upon the defects of his service, or upon some impropriety of motive that has mingled with his performance of it, till he looks upon it with pain instead of pleasure. Few things are more disgusting than the canting whine about the defects of their best services, which we not unfrequently hear from those who are only anxious to catch a compliment : and few things are more calculated to awaken our sympathy, than to see the truly humble Christian deploring that imperfection of his best services, which nothing but the anguish that it occasions him, induces him to mention. This is one of the ways in which Satan attempts to destroy the peace, and retard the progress, of the established Christian. In this case I have

found the following mode of address effectual in removing the delusion, and restoring peace. I have said to the sufferer, 'Your sorrows arise from your indulging a self-righteous spirit.' The charge is of course eagerly and conscientiously repelled. 'But then,' I ask, 'do you expect that your services are to be accepted, and your prayers heard, only through the mediation of our great High Priest, or on account of their own intrinsic and faultless excellence?' the latter supposition is also earnestly repelled. 'Well then, you expect that your desires and prayers can be accepted by God only through the mediation of our great High Priest; but you suppose at the same time, that his mediation is of so little efficacy, that it will procure no acceptance to your services and prayers, unless they, in themselves possess that absolute perfection, which would enable you to look upon them with satisfaction, and to hope for their acceptance, without any reference to his mediation at all.' This also is strongly denied. 'Then you admit that if your services and prayers are conscientiously presented to God, through the mediation of Christ, they will be accepted of him on the ground of that mediation, even though they possess no such intrinsic excellence and perfection as would make them acceptable without it; and if therefore you are distressed because you can detect imperfections in them, you are clearly distrusting the sufficiency of the mediation of Christ.' This mode of reasoning appears to admit of no reply; and

I have found it successful in enabling the mourner to detect the source of his causeless sorrows, and to recover that peace which results from a simple and unhesitating reliance upon our great High Priest, for the pardon of all our sins, and the acceptance of all our services.

Another duty which we owe to our great High Priest, is to live up to our privileges ; and that both as it regards our advancement in the spiritual life, and our enjoyment of spiritual pleasure. The Christian life is essentially a progressive thing ; for if the Christian be not improving, he is degenerating ; if he be not going forward, he is backsliding. Nothing can be a greater mistake than the opinion which seems to be entertained by many, that when a man has once reason to think himself a Christian, no farther improvement in his character can be expected, or needs to be sought after ;—that there can be no reason why he should possess a stronger faith, or more lively hope, or a larger measure, or a more active exercise, of all Christian graces when he is forty years of age, than when he was thirty. He who entertains such a notion has abundant reason to doubt whether he yet knows any thing about the Christian life. The Christian cannot be satisfied with his attainments in righteousness. He has felt the blessedness of being able to approach God as a Father, and of being delivered from the distressing and degrading bondage of sin, and of having “ a conscience void of offence ;” and he will not, and

cannot be satisfied with any measure of that blessedness which he may attain. Every new attainment only communicates a warmer desire, and additional power, for making still further attainments. He comes to no period in his course, at which he will conceive he may safely stop, or at which, if he be animated by the genuine spirit of Christianity, he will feel disposed to stop. He looks forward to perfect conformity to the image of God,—to the complete extinction of that body of corruption which dwells in him,—to the consummation of holiness, as the final end of all his exertions, the ultimate aim of his being. And with all the glories of heaven in his view, and animated by that faith which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” he will consider every day lost which does not add to the treasures which it is the grand object of his life to lay up there “where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal.”

But among all the manifold and powerful motives that urge the Christian on in his course, the fact that his duty to his great High Priest imperiously requires a continual growth in grace, is fitted to operate with peculiar force—“He died that he might redeem us from all our iniquities,” and he entered into heaven—there to appear before God in order to procure for us, and bestow upon us, all the grace and all the power necessary to enable us to make our path “as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” And while our Priest stands ready



to procure for us all spiritual blessings and all heavenly gifts ; and feels himself honoured and gratified the more largely that we draw upon him for those fruits of righteousness which are “ to the praise of his grace ; ” how can we pretend to be his disciples at all, or with what feelings can we hope to meet him, if we can permit days, and months, and years, to pass away, without even calling upon him at all, or calling upon him only in a feeble and formal manner, for the exercise of his sacerdotal office on our behalf ; and are living as if, so far as we are concerned, it were a matter of no consequence whether Christ be, or be not a Priest,—whether he do, or do not possess the power of procuring for us, every thing necessary to enable us to go on from grace to grace, and from strength to strength, till we appear perfect before God in Zion. The Son of the Sovereign announceth to the discovered and condemned rebel, that he possesses an influence which enables him to secure to the rebel not only his Father’s pardon, but such favour as will advance him from step to step, and from rank to rank, till he occupy a high and honourable place in the court of the King against whom he had rebelled ; and that he will with delight exercise that influence on his behalf, both because he loves the rebel, and because every exercise of that influence manifests his own power, and adds to his own honour. Now if the rebel never applies for the exercise of that influence in his behalf, if he act just as if no such offer had ever been made to him, who will believe

him when he says, that he not only believes the announcement made to him, but receives it with all joy and gratitude, and glories in having such a mediator? Is it not plain that through some fatal delusion, — some unaccountable infatuation, he in reality prefers his imprisonment, his chains, and his condemnation? Or would it at all mend the matter for him to say, that though he was making no use of the privilege offered him now, he was fully determined to avail himself of it hereafter? Would not such a profession be still considered as amounting to absolute insanity? And would not the rebel be justly held to be treating the offered mediation with insult, and to be rendering his execution both certain and unpitied?

Now I need hardly say that the conduct of this supposed rebel, is the very description of the conduct of many who call themselves Christians. Our great High Priest stands before the throne of God, ready to procure for, and bestow upon us, justification, adoption and sanctification; together with that assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end, which in this life do either accompany or flow from them; and finally to make us perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. Yet there are many of us who call ourselves Christians, and profess that we believe all this, and that the all-sufficiency of Christ is all our hope and all our desire, while in fact we are regarding all these

blessings as something that we profess to hope that we shall sometime or other obtain, but which we are, in the mean time, neither possessing, nor even seeking to obtain, as a present possession ;—nay nor even seeming to be at all sensible, that, as a present possession, they are at all to be either obtained or sought after. Salvation is looked upon as something to be obtained and enjoyed in a future state, and to be seriously sought for, only when we can engage in worldly concerns no longer ; not as something which it is the first concern of man to obtain, and the possession of which alone is able to carry us comfortably through all the duties and trials of life. This is exactly as if the rebel should say, that when actually brought to the scaffold, it would then be time enough to think of the effectual Mediator offered to him ; or as if the sick man should say that he would enjoy his disease as long as possible, and then when death seemed inevitable, would apply to the physician who could, and who alone could certainly heal him. Can this delay in seeking for salvation, and for all the blessings which attend it, be considered as any thing else than the most grievous insult to our High Priest ? And if the rebel or the sick man just mentioned, would be considered as clearly insane, should they act in so absurd a manner, when life is at stake ; upon what possible grounds can we consider those as less clearly chargeable with insanity, who act in this manner, when eternal life is in question ? “ The children of this world are wiser in their generation

than the children of light ; ” and were it not that our hearts are depraved, and our minds blinded, and our moral perceptions so blunted, and our moral judgments so perverted, that we call “ evil good and good evil,” it is utterly impossible that any man could ever be guilty of conduct with regard to the salvation of his immortal soul, which no man could be deemed sane who should follow with regard to his worldly concerns. And will not every mouth be stopped before God, and every one be totally incapable of offering the slightest reason why the vials of a righteous indignation should not be poured out upon us, when we have refused to seek a salvation which he so long waited to bestow upon us ? “ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? ”

And how often is even the true Christian chargeable with living far below his privilege ! He not only believes in the efficacy of Christ’s mediation, but has, in some measure experienced that efficacy, and has been brought out of darkness into light, and made a partaker of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But is he then always found rejoicing in the step which he has already gained, and, animated by the experience of the past, pressing onward to new attainments, in the hope of still higher enjoyments ? With a power put into his hands to enable him ever to renew his strength, to mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint ; is he always found applying this power to the utmost, and rejoicing as a strong man to run his

glorious race? How often, on the contrary, does he seem to forget that he has a race to run, and a warfare to wage! and, loitering amidst the occupations or the cares or the pleasures of life, to need the monitory rebuke, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God!" And can our High Priest fail to be offended, and his Holy Spirit grieved, when he sees the grace which he is so ready to give, so little used, and so sparingly sought?

The Christian life ought to be, because Christ has amply provided the means by which it may be made, a life of alacrity and joy. It is not more the privilege of the Christian, than it is a duty which he owes to his High Priest, to "rejoice always." "Woman, why weepest thou," were the first words of the risen Saviour to Mary, and they seem to be generally applicable to the life of the Christian. He can look upon that rich field of privilege and of promise placed before him in the Bible, and can say that it is all his own. And where is the want that the blessed fruits of that field cannot supply, the distress which they cannot relieve, the wound that they cannot heal, the fear that they cannot quell, or the sorrow for which they do not furnish abundant consolation? Where then is the cause for depression? Friend of Jesus, why weepest thou? If you have "an Advocate with the Father," through whom your sins are all forgiven, and you are made a child of God; and



the Holy Ghost is given you as your sanctifier and comforter ; and you are assured of having Almighty power for your support, and unerring wisdom for your guide, and heaven for your eternal home, what can overbalance or suppress the joy which naturally results from such privileges as these ? Trials we may, we must meet with ; but can these depress us, when we know that “ our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory ? ” If tried by bodily pain, we just feel more keenly the happiness of the hope which anticipates the time when we shall have “ a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Worldly losses will not overwhelm us, if we know that we are undoubted heirs of an “ inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Friends may change ; but we will be comforted by the assurance that in Christ we have a “ brother born for adversity,” nay “ a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” There rolls between us and our Father’s house, the deep and restless tide of this world’s corruption, through which we must of necessity pass, and the deeper and still more dangerous tide of the corruptions of our hearts, and we are surrounded by enemies on every side ; and when we feel our own weakness, we may be ready to fear lest we should one day fall by the hand of some of them. But every distressing fear is removed when we recollect that we “ shall not be tempted beyond what we are able to bear,”

and that, in point of fact, there is no limit to our power, for we “can do all things, through Christ strengthening us,” and that the life that is in us is the life of Christ, a life which no power can extinguish in any one of Christ’s members, any more than it can extinguish it in our glorious Head.

In every thing, therefore, does it become the Christian to give thanks,—even for those trials which call into exercise, and thus strengthen his graces; for though “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby.” The Christian can therefore “glory in tribulation,” well knowing that when he comes to the end of his course, and looks back on all his blessings, and on all his trials, when he sings of mercy, he will see reason to sing of judgment too. But when we drag on heavily, as if there were disheartening difficulties to be met, and heavy penalties to be endured, at every step, we bring up an evil report upon the good land; and make the world believe that we serve a harsh master, who demands much while he gives little; and confirm the too readily adopted notion, that religion is a dull and gloomy thing, the death of all pleasure, and the grave of all enjoyment. And if we go to the discharge of every duty, as if there were a “lion in the way,” and go to meet trial and temptation with feelings like those with which Saul went from Endor to Gilboa, what but discomfiture can we expect,

when we engage under the depressing influence of anticipated defeat? We are invited to come, and that even “with boldness, to the throne of grace.” And why should we not do so? If indeed, we depended for obtaining the petitions that we ask, upon our own merits, and might ask nothing but what we deserve, then it would be useless to go to a throne of grace, or to take the name of God into our lips at all; since we have deserved only wrath. But if our petitions be founded on the merits of Christ, then we can ask nothing that he has not deserved, and nothing that, if it be really good for us, he is not willing to bestow. In this case, to come to God with fear and hesitation, to limit our petitions to small matters, because we feel that we have no claim to ask larger, or to make our own merits, in any degree the measure of our acceptance, or to ask, as if God would grudge what he bestows,—in all this we are just dishonouring our great High-Priest, and living far beneath the privileges which he bestows upon us. To consider religion as being our business, but the world as the source from which we must draw our pleasures,—to approach God in prayer as a duty which it is right, and proper, and profitable to perform, but without any notion or feeling of its being a privilege which it is delightful to enjoy,—to come to him as a Judge whose good will it is our interest to conciliate, without being able to look upon him as a Father whose power, and riches, and kindness, it gives us pleasure to con-

template and celebrate, and whose approving smile, the light of whose countenance, is a greater treasure than corn and wine and oil,—is to take a view of that communion to which God calleth us, and of the privileges which he has conferred upon us, that must greatly mar both our peace, and our progress in the Christian life. While therefore every thing approaching to presumption, or to that affected familiarity with God which some appear to mistake for filial confidence, is to be guarded against with the most sedulous care; with equal care ought we to guard against that distrust of our High-Priest which makes us dread to exercise and to enjoy, with the most perfect confidence and freedom, the privileges which in Christ Jesus we possess.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRIST OUR KING.

I PROCEED now to the consideration of our Lord's regal office ; and here it will be seen that his death, and consequently his incarnation, was essentially necessary to the due discharge of his functions as a King. From all eternity, he was Lord over all ; possessing in common with the other persons of the Godhead, power to sustain and to bless his true worshippers, and to involve his enemies in destruction. But as Mediator, he was the Father's Servant, and could have no kingdom which was not conferred upon him. And no kingdom could be conferred upon him which he did not gain ; nor could he be the Saviour of men without conquering men's foes ; nor could he be Lord of all things visible and invisible, for the purpose of effectually securing the salvation of his people, without purchasing this dignity, by a full and faithful discharge of the duties imposed upon him, and undertaken by him in the covenant entered into between him and the Father. A kingdom was given to the Son by the Father ; a kingdom which he will continue to hold until the



mystery of redemption be finished, when he shall again deliver up the kingdom, that God may be "All in All." It is to this kingdom that we refer, when we speak of Christ as a King ; and not of that underived lordship, which, as God, he possessed from all eternity ; which could not be conferred upon him, and which cannot be taken away from him ; which had no beginning, and can have no end ; which admits of no increase, of no diminution, and of no change. Of this kingdom we speak not.

With regard to the Mediator's kingdom, we must first inquire how far it extends. The answer to this inquiry is, that his kingdom extends over all things visible and invisible,—over all the works of God, and is just as extensive as the dominion which he possesses as God. In confirmation of this, I refer not to those texts of Scripture in which he is declared to be the Maker of all things, and consequently their possessor ; for nothing gives so strong a right to dominion, so plain a title to lordship, as creation ; because these texts refer to his absolute dominion as God. But I refer to the numerous passages in which it is declared that God hath committed to him all rule, and all authority, and all judgment,—that he hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church,

which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all ; ” <sup>1</sup>—that “ God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” <sup>2</sup>

The possession of this universal dominion is plainly necessary to the Mediator. For if there exist in the universe some power or influence which he cannot control and direct at his pleasure, then it is clear that he can give us no absolute assurance of salvation ; because that power may become adverse to our salvation, and Christ being unable to control and direct it, having no dominion over it, cannot accomplish his gracious design toward us. The possession then of all power and authority, over all things visible and invisible, must, of plain necessity, be in the Saviour. We are held in bondage by the “ god of this world,” and are opposed by all the powers of a fallen world, by temptations from without, and by corruption within,—we contend not merely with flesh and blood, but “ with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickednesses in high places.” Now if our Saviour possesses not the most unlimited dominion over all these, he plainly cannot accomplish our salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Philippians ii. 10.

It is plain, too, that this universal dominion must have been conferred upon him, and must have been exercised by him, from the moment when man first became dependant upon a Mediator. For if he saved men from the beginning, then from the beginning was he universal King. But this seems to be in direct opposition to those texts of Scripture,—and they are neither few nor of doubtful import,—which represent the conferring of dominion upon him, as the reward of his obedience unto death. These texts however do not contradict, but perfectly harmonize with the assertion, that Christ, as Mediator, possessed and exercised universal dominion, long before his death or his Incarnation. In order to shew the perfect agreement of these texts with this assertion, I would remark that there never was any other Saviour besides the Lord Jesus Christ; and that he never saved sinners through any other method than by atonement. Abel and the primitive saints were saved only in consequence of the death of Christ; and yet they were saved long before he actually accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. They were washed from their sins in his blood; yet the washing was effected long before his blood was shed. To suppose that they were saved without the mediation of Christ, is to suppose that that mediation was altogether unnecessary. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. But sin was remitted, and remitted only in consequence of the shedding of a Saviour's blood, and yet re-

mitted long before the shedding actually took place. Again, the gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the fruits of Christ's death and intercession. Thus at one period we read that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified," and our Lord himself, shewing the necessity of his death, says, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." But had the Holy Ghost never been given before the death of Christ actually took place? Yes, often, both in his miraculous and in his saving efficacy. Yet it is not the less true that the Holy Ghost never could, by any possibility be given, except as the fruit of Christ's death. From these instances we may see how the universal dominion of the Mediator was conferred upon him in consequence of his becoming obedient unto death, and was yet enjoyed and exercised by him long before that death actually took place. From the moment that he undertook to obey unto death, from that moment did he receive power to confer all the benefits of his death, and from that moment men were made partakers of the salvation which is in him. Had there been a possibility that he might fail in his engagement,—that his sufferings might overcome his resolution, or overtask his ability, then no pardon could have been given, no sanctification conferred, and no blessedness bestowed, until he had actually died, and

thus fairly proved that failure was no longer possible, nor to be feared.

But there was also a real exaltation of Christ after his death, and in consequence of his death, in that humanity, which, having no existence previous to his Incarnation, could not possibly have any participation in that dominion which belongs to the Mediator. But that exaltation of Christ, after his death, was not the conferring upon him of any new power or glory which he did not previously possess. It was an open manifestation of that glory which he had from the beginning,—an open declaration of that which was not previously known. Appearing in the flesh, his condition was one of lowliness and humiliation. His glory was but partially known. But his assumption of humanity was not a limitation of his Divinity; and after performing his appointed work, he was, in that humanity, publicly and openly in the presence of his Apostles received up on high. But this exaltation was no conferring upon him of that which he did not previously possess. It was giving him the same glory, in a new condition. But the glory was the same, as he himself declares—“ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven; ”<sup>1</sup> and again, “ What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before ? ”<sup>2</sup> And when he prayed that he might be openly glorified, he prayed for no new accession of glory which

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 62.



he had not previously possessed, but that, in his humanity, he might possess that same glory that he possessed before his Incarnation,—“ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”<sup>1</sup>

In his exaltation therefore he received no new power, which he had not exercised long before. But its exercise was founded on his death; and after that death had actually occurred, then was he exalted in his humanity, and his exaltation was then openly declared and manifested to the world, and the condition upon which it depended was shewn to have been satisfactorily accomplished. As the king can and does exercise all the functions of royalty previous to that solemn coronation which formally invests him with these functions, even so our Divine King discharged all the duties of his office, long before that assumption of humanity, and obedience unto death, which formed the ground upon which he received, and was the open declaration that he had received, the kingdom.

That Christ was a King from the beginning may therefore be considered as proved. This however forms one of the most important points in discussing the question as to the sinfulness of his humanity, and therefore calls for a more minute and extended proof. It will however be better given after shortly noticing the titles by which he holds his kingdom. He holds his kingdom by the Father's *gift*, as has been already

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 5.

observed. Of this I need produce no proof whatever, both as it must be perfectly familiar to all readers of the Bible, and because I know not that it is doubted or denied by any who acknowledge that he is a King. He holds the kingdom also by the title of *conquest*. Mankind were the slaves of Satan, who had brought them into a bondage from which no human being was ever found who could emancipate himself. Christ became man, and conquered him, and, ascending up on high, led captivity captive. Satan therefore is the "god of this world" no longer. We may continue to obey him, and yield to his suggestions, and promote his designs, and reject Christ, if we will. We are not however the less the subjects of Christ. The Master whom we serve is Christ's vassal, and we are as completely dependent upon him as his most devoted worshipper. When, as man, he reduced Satan beneath his power, he reduced at the same time beneath his power, all the subjects of Satan. And this I conceive to be a sufficient answer, besides other answers that may be given, to the question put to us by the new theology, in support of the doctrine of universal redemption,—'if Christ did not redeem all, what right can he have to judge the unbeliever, whom he did not die to redeem?' The question, though triumphantly asked, is silly enough, and is nearly similar to another. Our Lord says of believers, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." Hence it may be asked, what right has he to sit in judgment upon those who

were never given to him? I would reply, that in one sense, even the impenitent were given to him, though not in the sense used by our Lord in the above expression ; but it is a sufficient reply to both questions, that our Lord holds his kingdom not merely by gift,—a gift that in one sense includes all mankind—but also by conquest. And becoming, as Man, Lord of the sinner's master, he becomes Lord of the sinner too.

He holds his Kingdom also by *purchase*. This, in these days, is a very obnoxious expression. There is however no help for it, as the matter is undeniably true. He purchased us not from Satan ; but took us as a prey from the mighty, and as captives from the strong. But we were held fast also by the Law of God, bound down to punishment by his Truth and Justice. These could not be conquered ; nor, excepting by fallen sinful beings, could they be opposed. Christ could not, by any exercise of power, wring us out of the hands of the Law, nor could he at all exercise any power in opposition to it. He fully admitted all its demands. He made no attempt whatever to abate the slightest iota of them ; but, acknowledging, nay proclaiming, the justice of its claims, he satisfied these claims to the full,—endured its penalty,—paid all its demands, and, by purchase, set its victims free. The whole of its rights, therefore, were fully transferred to him, to bind or to loose, to remit or to retain men's sins, as he should see good.

It was necessary to prove that Christ actually exer-

cised all the functions of the Priesthood while he was on earth, because the tenet that he was not anointed to the Priesthood until his resurrection from the dead, which has long been one of the leading tenets of Socinianism, and is now maintained by a different class of theologians, is an effectual denial of the atonement. For if he was not truly and properly a Priest when he died, then it is clear that his death could be no atonement. For a similar reason, it is necessary to enter a little more largely into the proof that he was a King from the beginning ; for this is also denied, and it is maintained by some that he was anointed as a King only at his resurrection, and by others that he is not anointed to that office yet : and this doctrine, as will be seen by and by, is quite as effectual a denial of the atonement. In proof then that Christ was a King from the beginning, I would refer to Psalm ii. It may indeed be said, and truly said, that that Psalm is a prophecy which yet remains to be fulfilled. But that it refers to the past, as well as the future may, I think, be very decisively proved. Into that proof however I need not here enter, both because satisfaction upon that point may probably be met with in any commentary, and because I have abundant proof of my proposition, even if the argument from that Psalm should be held to be disputable.

I would refer also to Psalm xlv. There the prophetic character of Christ is first spoken of, when it is said, " Grace is poured into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever," and then follows

this splendid description of his regal power and authority, “ Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy Majesty. And in thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness : therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” In Psalm xxii. also, his prophetic and royal characters are so blended, as to render it impossible to suppose that the one of these could commence at one period, and the other at another. In Psalm cx., his regal character is, in the same way, combined with his Priesthood, leading irresistibly to the conclusion, that all these characters he adopted, that to all these offices was he anointed, at one and the same time. Indeed a perfectly conclusive proof of this, to all who have not pledged themselves to the support of some hypothesis with which it is inconsistent, would, I should think, be found in the fact, that he saved men from the beginning ; and surely he could save no man without being Prophet, Priest, and King. At least if he could save men while destitute of any of the powers of any of these offices, at one time, I can see no reason why he should not be capable of doing the same thing at



another time, and at all times, nor, consequently, why he should assume at all any office which was not necessary to enable him to save sinners.

The prophet Daniel has determined an appointed time "to anoint the Most Holy;" but he has taken no notice whatever of a variety of anointings at very different times. But if Christ was in reality to be anointed at very different times, and for different purposes, then the statement of the prophet with regard to a time appointed for anointing him, is not merely defective, but has a strong tendency to mislead.

That Christ was a King at his coming into the world, is proved by the fact, that the first specific character under which he is presented to us in the New Testament is that of a King. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born *King* of the Jews?" Now when these men were led by the Holy Spirit from a far country to proclaim the birth of this King, and when they must have come to worship him, not merely as King of the Jews, a person in whom they could have no concern, but as that generally-expected King, who arising in Judea was to obtain the dominion of the world, who was to be the "Salvation of God to all the ends of the earth,"—"a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of Israel,"—a King the expectation of whose coming was so general, that the flatterers of Vespasian professed to find the fulfilment of the

prophecy in him ; upon what possible ground can it be rationally maintained that the person so distinctly announced as the long-promised king, was in reality at that time no king at all, nor to be made a king till after his death ? He was revealed to, and distinctly announced by the wise men as a King ; and I cannot conceive how any man can deny this statement, and maintain that Christ was no King till after his death, or that he is no King even yet, without seeing that he is as flatly as possible contradicting the Bible. Nothing can be more clear than that Jesus is, at his birth, designated a King. If then he in reality was not a King, then the conclusion is unavoidable that the scripture statement is not true.

Again, when our Saviour entered into the temple which the Jews were making a house of merchandise, and when, “ Having made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen ; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables ; and said unto them that sold doves, take these things hence ; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise,” he was surely, in thus purging the temple, not only assuming to himself both a sacerdotal and royal prerogative, but was giving a most unequivocal manifestation of his royal authority. For who is this who not only utters so unpleasant a command, but who so imperiously compels an instantaneous obedience to it ? Is this the carpenter’s son, the despised Nazarene, the obscure peasant from the polluted land of Galilee

of the Gentiles? Assuredly, no. Had he appeared in the temple under no other character than this, and attempted such a purgation of it, he would at once have been stoned to death, or torn in pieces. It is plain that they who thus submitted to be driven from the temple, which they had converted into a house of merchandise, who even saw their money poured out without daring to resist, must have beheld in him who thus drove them away, the unequivocal manifestation of a majesty that was not to be opposed,—of a regal authority and power, that might not for a moment brook resistance. He was at that time claiming to himself the honour and the submission due to a King, and as assuredly and as fully possessed that character then, as he does now, or ever will do.

All the prophets describe Christ as a King. Their testimony however I shall not quote, because it might be alleged,—especially considering the mode of interpreting prophecy now adopted, or rather the mode of rambling through it in a style that bids defiance to all interpretation,—that these prophecies remain yet to be fulfilled. One however, with regard to which no such allegation can be made, I shall quote. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”<sup>1</sup> Here it is most distinctly declared that Christ should come as a King; and the prediction

<sup>1</sup> Zech. ix. 9.

was fulfilled to the very letter, when, at the triumphant entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem, "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Now the evangelists do expressly declare that by this entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem, the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled. If then Christ was no King at that time, the plain consequence is that the evangelists were mistaken. And can any man then deny that Christ was a King, and yet pretend to reverence the Scriptures ?—Moreover when the Pharisees were offended at the open declaration made by the disciples that Christ was Messiah the King, and desired him to rebuke them ; so far was he from complying with their request, and repressing the voices that hailed him as the long-promised King, that "He answered, and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out ;" thus declaring it to be a matter of the most absolute necessity that he should be openly announced as King. Indeed had there been any one of his offices, in which he did not distinctly announce himself to the Jews, then, *so far*, had they been guiltless, they could not be charged with the guilt of rejecting that which was never offered to them.

That Christ was distinctly announced to the Jews as a King, is certain, not only from the fulfilment



of the prophecy just quoted, but from the terms in which they accused him to Pilate,—“ We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King.” And was he, who thus distinctly announced himself to the Jews as the long-expected King, whom their eyes were almost failing with looking for,—who was acknowledged by Nathanael, and hailed by the multitude, as “ King of Israel,”—who was accused by the priests of this very thing, that he declared himself to be a King,—and who distinctly acknowledged himself, before Pilate, to be a King, whose kingdom was not of this world ; was he, after all, no King in reality, but only a King in expectance ? And are we to suppose that it was without the providence of God, and without the dictation of his Holy Spirit, that Pilate wrote, and, though intreated by the offended Jews, refused to alter that inscription which officially, and more truly than Pilate knew, declared that he who was suspended on the cross was “ King of the Jews ? ” In short, if the proofs given us in Scripture that Christ was a King, when he was on earth, still leaves that matter doubtful, nay, if in the face of all that proof, we are to believe that in reality he was no King, then we may at once set aside the Scriptures altogether. They are totally incompetent to establish any fact ; for there is no fact that they more clearly and decidedly teach, than that Christ was a King.

But Christ came not only as King of the Jews,



but he came that in man's nature he might overthrow mans' foes, might spoil the spoiler, divest Satan of his long-usurped dominion, enter into the strong man's house, bind him and take from him his goods, and cast out the prince of this world. He came as a King, that he might meet and conquer him who had become the king of this world, and for this reason the contest was carried on in such a way, as to render the conquest of Christ, and the fall of Satan as lightning from heaven, perfectly manifest to all. I might refer in proof of this to what is related by different authors with regard to the silencing of the heathen oracles. Thus we are told by Nicephorus, Lib. i. cap. 17, that when the Roman emperor consulted the oracle of Apollo with a double hecatomb, he received for answer, 'A Hebrew child, a God who rules the gods themselves, has commanded me to depart, and to return to my dreary home. Henceforth therefore let the suppliant retire unanswered from my altars.' I prefer however confining myself to what is related in Scripture. One of the most prominent facts recorded in the Gospels is, that Satan was, about the time of our Lord's appearance, permitted to take possession of men in a very extraordinary manner, thus openly manifesting and exercising his power over them, in a way which they were plainly incapable of resisting; and a great proportion of our Saviour's miracles consisted in casting out devils. Now all the different hypotheses that have been resorted to for the purpose of accounting

for the possession of the demoniacs mentioned in the Gospel, I hold to be just so many expedients for evading the plain and palpable statements of Scripture. Having but little reverence for the learned arts by which the obvious meaning of Scripture is refined into something too sublime for vulgar apprehension, I conceive the demoniacs mentioned in the Gospel, just to have been persons possessed by Satan, who was thus permitted to exercise an unusual degree of power, both that it might not be thought that the woman's seed assailed him at a time when his power was either more restrained, or less energetically exercised than usual, and that his defeat and Christ's superiority might be more clearly manifested to all. This view of the matter our Lord himself teaches us to take. When the seventy returned again to him rejoicing that through his name even devils were subject to them, his remark upon their communication is, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Yes, the devils knew him to be the "Holy one of God," they trembled at his name, they shunned his presence, they fled his approach, they offered no resistance to his commands, but, to the utter astonishment of the people, shewed their complete subjection to him; thus proclaiming with their own mouths the fall of Satan from his seat of usurped power, and the complete victory of him who proved himself to be his long-expected conqueror by this, that the people from what their own eyes saw, could say, "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with

authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." They did obey him, and in many cases openly confessed who he was ; and we wonder at, and mourn over the hardness of their hearts, who could look upon the manifest victory of Christ, and his resistless destroying of the works of the devil, and yet could refuse to believe ; while we ourselves can look upon the same thing, and yet coolly deny, that when he conquered Satan he was a King at all.

When man was made, there was given to him "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." By his fall, man in a great measure became divested of that dominion. But our Lord as an unfallen man, possessed all that dominion which fallen man had lost ; as is plainly declared in Psalm viii. ; and is amply proved by the record of his life. But not only as an unfallen man did he possess all the dominion over the inferior creatures, which was lost by the fall ; but angels ministered to him, devils were subject to him, the elements of nature obeyed him, death gave up his prey at his command, and yet he was no King. Can the power and influence of theory be more fatally manifested than in them who maintain this ? Some of the people said, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than this man doeth ?" So would I say, when he is anointed a King, will he do any thing of a more decidedly regal character, than he did

when he was on earth? Will he do more than rule over the material and spiritual world,—over that which is fallen, and that which never fell,—over the dominion of Satan and the power of death? That his power will be more visibly exercised, and more extensively manifested, I most willingly grant; that it will or can be more really exercised, or more truly manifested, I am inclined to think impossible.

During his life, the devils had no power over our Lord, but their defeat was made manifest by the resistless authority with which he issued his commands to them; so that they could assail him only through the instrumentality of wicked men. But the hour of their power did come,—the hour when the soul of Jesus began to be “amazed and very heavy,” words which fall far short indeed of the energy of the original, as the original, and all other language must fall far short of expressing, in an adequate manner, all the fearfulness of that amazement and horror which then seized him. The hour did come which made him cry out, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Now what was it that made the prospect of this hour so terrible to Jesus? Was it the mere dread of death? The supposition is totally inconsistent with the whole of his conduct and character; and no less inconsistent with the fact, that he knew well that death had no power over him whatever, farther than he himself



was pleased to allow. Many of his disciples have endured the cross, and submitted to the most cruel tortures ; and even women and children have suffered all these tortures without a groan. And did Jesus look on the mere pain of dying, with more than all the terror, and cling to a troubled life with more than all the weakness of mortal man ? No. It was not dying that he dreaded, but the fearful conflict by which his death was to be preceded. The powers of darkness were all let loose upon him, to assail him with their utmost force. A broken law came to demand of him the restitution of its violated honour, and to inflict upon him the curse due to its violation. And was it only a part of its demands that it then insisted upon ? No, it came armed with all the authority of inflexible justice, and not one iota of what that justice entitled it to claim, was remitted, “ The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all,” and he “ bare them in his own body, on the tree : ” and he bare them not in outward seeming merely, without in reality feeling all their final consequences. And the amazement and sorrow that these consequences inflicted upon him, he himself could not express, and we can not conceive. For if, when the sinner is first awakened to a sense of his guilt, or when the backslider begins to be filled with the fruits of his own ways,—when conscience is setting all his sins in array before him, and the law is stamping all the bitterness of its curse upon every one of them, thus filling his heart with terrors that can find expression



only in groanings unutterable, and more fearful by far than the terrors of death;—if the guilt of one individual can thus fill the heart of that individual with such anguish and such agony, who may venture to form any estimate of the agony endured by Christ when he made his soul an offering for sin,—when the deceit of Jacob, the adultery and murder of David, the denial of Peter, and the persecutions of Paul,—when the sins of an apostate world were collected into one dark mass, and its whole burden laid upon him? The law, inexorable as the stony tablets on which it was engraved, was there, setting all the sins by which a guilty world had been polluted, and its sanctity violated, in array before him, filling his soul with all their terrors, and exacting from him the penalty due to them all. And death was there, armed with a power, and clothed with terrors, with which he never before or since assailed living being. It is sin that forms the sting of death, and invests him with all his powers. And if his assaults be terrible to every individual of us, on account of our own individual sins,—and if he be terrible to us often, even when we know that these sins are all forgiven, who may estimate the power and the terror with which he assailed our Lord, when armed with the power, and invested with the terrors, not of the sins of an individual, but of those of a lost world? And he who had the power of death, even Satan, was there, with all his powers unfettered and unrestrained, to try what they might avail against the

“second man,” in the hour of his sorest travail. And the prince of the power of the air spread darkness over all the land, and made the earth to quake in the mightiness of his efforts. But these were only faint and feeble shadows of the darkness and commotion, which were raised in the soul of the sufferer, in that hour of his dismal conflict, when his power to accomplish the original promise was put to its last fearful trial ; when he fully realized the hope which fallen man had long been given to cherish, that we should be delivered from our bondage, and raised from our fallen and sinful state, by a suffering conqueror.

Now had there been, in any department of Christ's person, any thing to which the terms fallen, sinful, rebellious, could, with the most distant approach to truth or justice, be applied, was his escape from this hour of the power of darkness a thing within the bounds of possibility ? Had the law found in him the slightest taint of sinfulness to which it might attach the curse due to its violation, it would have held him fast in its adamantine chain, as a debtor on his own account ; and never would he have been able to rescue himself, much less us, from its inexorable grasp. Had death, and he who had the power of death, found the slightest ground in which the sting of death could be planted, then assuredly had death had forcible dominion over him, and the blackness of that darkness which was around him and within him, in the garden and on the cross, had been his

portion for ever. But he endured their utmost rage, deeply tried, tried with a trial beyond aught that mortal man may ever comprehend, yet unsubdued, and unsubdued just because there was in him nothing fallen or sinful. He endured till the law had no farther claim, till the powers of darkness fled, their utmost efforts defeated and baffled, and with them passed away the darkness from the land, and from the soul of the victorious and triumphant sufferer, and Satan saw that his long usurped dominion over the world was now utterly and hopelessly broken. He endured till he could say "It is finished," till "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross." He endured till the agony which wrung from him the bitter complaint of being forsaken was past, and holy peace and joy returned, with the light of his Father's countenance, to his soul, from which they had for a time withdrawn; and then, having openly shewn that the prince of this world had nothing in him, he freely and voluntarily gave a life which was still his own to give or to keep, for the life of a lost world. Fearful was the conflict that he sustained during the hour of the "power of darkness," but happy and glorious was the result, and splendid and blessed was the victory in which his sufferings terminated, and most royally triumphant was his death.

From these remarks as to the regal character of Christ's death, the inference is very fairly deducible, that his death, even up to the last moment of his

mortal existence, was perfectly voluntary,—that at that moment, whether he would or would not die, was a thing as completely within his power to determine, as, previous to his Incarnation, it was within his power to determine whether he would or would not become man. But this is a point of by far too much importance to be left without more direct and abundant evidence : for the decision of this question will very effectually decide the question whether our Lord's humanity was fallen and sinful : and I may add that it will also decide whether his death was an atonement or not. They who maintain that the humanity of Christ was fallen sinful humanity, also maintain,—as of plain necessity they must,—that he died by the common property of flesh to die because it was accursed in the loins of our first parents,—that he died just for the same reason that other men die, that he was just as incapable of shunning or resisting death, as any of the fallen race of Adam. And if he was fallen and sinful, this conclusion there is no avoiding. If then it can be shewn that death had no power over him, that he died because he pleased so to do, when he pleased, and how he pleased,<sup>1</sup> then is it also decisively shewn that he was not fallen and sinful.

<sup>1</sup> Demonstravit Spiritus Mediatoris, quam nulla pœna peccati usque ad mortem carnis accesserit, quia non eam deseruit invitus, sed quia voluit, quando voluit, quomodo voluit. *Augustine De Trinitate*, Lib. iv. cap. 16. A chapter the object of which is to prove that the death of Christ was spontaneous. But upon this subject I shall have abundant extracts to produce from the primitive writers, in the sequel.

In support of the position that Christ was not subject to death, but that he laid down his life of his own accord, I quote his own express declaration to that purpose—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."<sup>1</sup> Nothing, it appears to me, can possibly be simpler, or clearer, or more unambiguous than this declaration of our Lord, that his life was at his own disposal. This he spoke of his human life; for it would be worse than absurd to suppose, that before he had a human life, he could have used any such language, or could have said of his Divine life, that he had power to lay that down. And when he stated, with regard to the human life which he had assumed, that he had power to lay it down and to take it up again, he was stating what was not true, if he were a fallen sinful man, and just as liable to death as other men, and for the same reason. He could not say that he had power to lay down his life, and to take it up again, in order to shew that he was Lord both of life and death, if in fact he was just as incapable of avoiding or resisting death as those to whom he spoke. Nor could he say at all that he had power to lay down his life, if, in point of fact, he had no power to retain it. If he was not God, and had not assumed human life at his

<sup>1</sup> John x. 17, 18.



own pleasure, then he could have used no such language ; for no created being can, by any possibility, possess the power here claimed by Jesus. But if he was God, and if the human life which he had assumed was as truly his own life as his Divinity was his own, then he unquestionably did possess a sovereign right to dispose of that life as he pleased. And if he had not that power over his own life which no created being can have, then it was not possible to present that life a voluntary offering for the world. It was not his to give. In that case he did no more than Codrus, Curtius, and a hundred more have done. Being bound to die at any rate, he was generous enough to anticipate the date of his death, in order to accomplish an important purpose, and acquire a deathless fame. Though what important purpose could be accomplished by his death, if he had placed himself in a situation where death was unavoidable, it is not easy to see.

It manifests little reverence for Scripture to attempt to mystify so very plain and explicit a declaration of the fact, that our Lord's life was not taken from him ; a declaration that might safely be left, without comment, to produce its own effect upon every unsophisticated mind. When our Lord's auditors saw him standing before them in living humanity, and heard him say, " I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again," can we suppose that they would, or possibly could think of any other life than just that human life which they saw him to possess,

or could understand the words which they heard to be equivalent to these, 'I may truly say that I have power to lay down my life, because though *now*, in consequence of the constitution which I have taken, I am as little capable of escaping death as other men, yet I took that constitution voluntarily, and had it in my power to choose whether I would take it or not.' They neither could so understand him, nor did so understand him. And the plain meaning of the text is undeniable, that even after Christ had become Man, he was under no other obligation to die than the obligation resulting from his covenant engagement to lay down his life for his sheep, and to become obedient unto death.

Should the possibility of a doubt yet remain whether the text under consideration just means what it so very plainly states,—should it be thought possible, without impiety, to understand our Lord to mean any thing else than just that at the moment when he was speaking, he had absolute power over the life which his hearers saw him possess, to lay it down and to take it up at his pleasure, let us consider the purpose for which he made the declaration. His object was to convince his auditors that he was the Life, and that therefore all who committed themselves to him would be perfectly safe, for none could pluck them out of his hand, which would, in fact, be equivalent to the plucking of them out of his Father's hand, with whom he declares his unity. And the proof that in him their life was safe, was, that he himself

had a life which no man could take from him,—a life over which death had no power. Now this is just the ground on which our confidence in him rests, that “as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself.” But if, when the hour of trial came, it was found that he could not resist the power of death in himself, nor realize the declaration that he made, that no man could take his life from him,—then how can we possibly rely upon him, that he can repel the power of death from us, or fulfil the promise that he has made to us, that none shall ever be able to pluck us out of his hand? Surely the power that wrested his own life out of his hands, may well be supposed capable of plucking ours out of his hands. He who could not save himself from the grasp of the King of terrors, can afford us little confidence in his power to save us. If, then, to maintain that Christ, as a fallen sinful man, was as incapable of resisting the power of death as we are,—if to maintain that when the hour of trial came, he conquered not death, but death conquered him, if this be not directly to falsify his own express declaration and to overthrow the very pillars of the Christian’s hope, I know not what can be considered as doing so.

It is of no avail to tell us that, at his resurrection, this gift of having life in himself,—this power by which the life of every one of his members is infallibly secured against all assaults, was restored to him. For how do we know that he holds that gift

now, by a firmer tenure than that by which he held it before? Or rather how can we help knowing that he holds it by no firmer tenure? When he made the declaration to the Jews with regard to his power of laying it down and taking it up again, he had all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, to enable him to resist any violence by which he might be assailed. Can he have more than all the fulness of the Godhead to guard it *now*? Yet we are told that a stronger than he came, and by violence took away the gift which the Father had given him for the life of the world. After the restoration of that gift, are we not left to dread, that by similar violence, it may again be taken away? since assuredly it can be secured by no stronger power now, than it was at first.

The text now commented upon is very frequently quoted by the early writers; and, as far as I recollect, not the slightest doubt as to its meaning just what it so plainly expresses, is manifested by any of them. Ample proofs of their clear and unvarying conviction that our Lord's life was not taken from him, but voluntarily given, will occur in the sequel. In the mean time, as a confirmation of my own view of the text, I shall quote two justly celebrated fathers. *Gregory Nyssen* says, 'Remember what our Lord says of himself, and you will know his power, and how by his own will, and by no necessity of nature, he separated his soul from his body,—*πως αυτοκρατορικη εξουσια, και ου φυσεως αναγκη διαζευγνυσι την ψυχην εκ του σωματος*—for no man, saith he, taketh my life from me, but

I lay it down of myself. This being so, what is sought will easily appear; for he who disposes of all things by his own authority, awaits not any necessity arising from his being betrayed, nor the assault of the Jews as of thieves, nor the sentence of Pilate, that their malice should become the principle and cause of the common salvation of men, &c.’<sup>1</sup> Gregory understood the Christian system too well to suppose that if Christ died by the necessity of a fallen sinful nature, his death could be any atonement. *Augustine* says, ‘There is much weight in that *I*; for *I lay down*, saith he, *I lay down my life, I lay down*. What means, *I lay it down*? Let not the Jews glory; they can rage, but power they can have none. Let them rage as much as they are able, if I choose not to lay down my life, what will their raging avail? &c.’<sup>2</sup>

Another text which very clearly evinces our Lord’s victory over death is thus written,—“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.”<sup>3</sup> To him, as man, death was naturally terrible; and coming to him armed

<sup>1</sup> Sermon I. On the Resurrection, Works Vol. II. p. 821.

<sup>2</sup> Cum magno pondere dictum est *Ego*; quia ego pono, inquit, pono animam meam, ego pono. Quid est, ego pono? Ego illam pono: non gloriantur Judæi; scævire potuerunt, potestatem habere non potuerunt. Scæviant quantum possunt; si ego noluero animam meam ponere, quid scævendo facturi sunt? With much more to the same purpose. On John. Tract 47. Section 6.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews v. 7.



with terrors incalculably greater than he ever assaulted any other man with, awakened prayers and supplications of the most earnest and pathetic description. One of them we have recorded in Psalm xxii. which he repeated on the cross : “ Deliver my soul from the sword ; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” Such were his prayers in the hour of his fearful conflict with the powers of darkness. And how was he heard ? Was it by being given up, a bound captive, into the power of death, and of him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ? No ; but he was heard by being sustained against all their violence, till he triumphed over them on the cross, and death, and he who had the power of death, fled away baffled, and found that they had met with one man, against whom their utmost efforts could avail nothing. And then he voluntarily laid down a life which was still his own, to give or to retain ; and he entered into the domain of death, not as a captive, but as a conqueror, to fulfil the prediction, “ O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” Could he accomplish this prediction by being overcome by death on the cross ? No ; had death, and he who had the power of death, for one moment overmastered him, then was every hope of a lost world extinguished, and that for ever.

I would refer also to the peculiar phraseology used with regard to the death of our Lord by the Evan-

gelists Matthew and John : ἀφηκε τὸ πνεῦμα, *he sent forth the ghost* ; παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα, *he gave up the ghost*. This language is applied to Christ alone ; and though a variety of phrases are used both in the Hebrew and Greek, to express the act of dying, no such phrases as these are ever applied to any other. I am aware that to give up the ghost, is repeatedly applied to others, in our translation, but in not one instance does the original sanction the translation. I am aware too, that in the Greek classics, a phraseology somewhat similar is employed ; for example, οὐ γὰρ ἐνθάδε ψυχὴν ἀφηκε Μενελαῶς, *Eurip. Hel. For Menelaus died not here*. But the ψυχή of the poet is not equivalent to the πνεῦμα of the Apostles. And even if it were, yet the careful appropriation of this phraseology to Christ alone, would afford sufficient ground for the supposition that they meant to speak of his death, as differing from that of other men, in its being voluntary. In short, the Greek phrase ψυχὴν ἀφηκε has little analogy to that of the apostles, and the Latin *efflare animam* has none whatever. *Emisit animam, non amisit*, is the appropriate remark of one of the fathers, I forget at the moment which of them.

There is another declaration of our Lord, uttered just before his last fearful conflict, which sets the voluntary nature of his death in a very clear light,—“ The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me command-

ment, even so I do.”<sup>1</sup> Had the prince of this world found any thing in Christ with which he could claim alliance, any thing, however slight, derived from him, either mediately through the guilt of our first parents, or immediately through his own temptations ; had he found in him aught of that law of the members which warreth against the law of the mind, then this would have been quite sufficient to authorize and enable him to inflict upon our Lord that death, the power of inflicting which had been delegated to him. But our Lord declares that though he was about to meet Satan, and was also about to die, he died not in consequence of any power which the prince of this world, the *præpositus mortis* had over him,—against this fatal idea he carefully guards his disciples,—but he died solely to shew the world the depth of his love to the Father ; to shew that though the command of the Father required him to submit to the very last extremity of mortal suffering, his love was sufficient to make him obey even unto death. But what becomes of this proof of his love, if in reality he was suspended on the cross because he could not help it, and his life was wrung from him by a violence which he could not sustain ? If the prince of this world conquered Christ upon the cross, and violently took his life away, then it is clear that Christ was not then, “ King of kings, and Lord of lords ; ” he had met with his superior ; he was not even a King at all, but a fallen sinful man. But

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 30.

how then could he save men, from the beginning of the world ? And if the cross was the scene of his defeat, and the monument of his weakness, how can it also be the foundation of our hopes, and the ground of our glorying ? Or with what truth could the Apostle say that he triumphed over principalities and powers on the cross, if there they, in reality triumphed over him ? If he died not as a King, and as a conquering sufferer, unquestionably his cross was the reverse of a triumph, and the Galatians were not so much to be blamed for being ashamed of it.

I appeal also, as a proof of the regal, the triumphal character of our Lord's death, to the circumstances that attended it, all of which strongly shew that, at the moment when it took place, it was perfectly voluntary. When the band of men and officers went out to take him, he shewed how easily he could not only have escaped out of their hands,—that he could have done long before, for he knew well of their intention to come and take him, and could have frustrated the traitor's purpose by going out of the way,—but how easily he could have resisted their utmost power, for “As soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backwards and fell to the ground,” overwhelmed, evidently, by some exhibition of his Divine power. And when his disciples would have defended him, he told them that if he wanted defence, he could have for that purpose, not twelve unarmed Apostles, but twelve legions of angels. “But then how shall the Scriptures be fulfilled,

that thus it must be ? ” Even after he was fastened to the cross, he shewed that he was still the life ; and even there did he exercise his regal functions in the promise that he made to the penitent thief. What could possibly induce that malefactor to apply, in such circumstances to a fellow-sufferer, to one who we are assured, was as incapable of resisting the death to which both had been doomed, as himself ? It is unquestionable that he had observed in Christ something more than mortal, when he addressed to him the prayer, “ Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” And why has the Holy Ghost recorded the fact, but to shew, that he who, in such a situation, could make the magnificent promise, “ Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,” was not himself the weak victim of death ? And are we to say that he who thus, almost with his dying breath, conferred eternal life, was unable to save his own life from the assault of death ? And when he had endured all that his foes, whether men or devils, could inflict ; when the darkness passed away, and the victory was won ; then did he cry out, not with the feeble breathings of a man whose agonies had worn him down to the very lowest stage of existence, and of whom death had all but taken possession, but with the shout of a conqueror, whose life, after all the assaults of death,—after innumerable deaths had been inflicted upon him, was yet as whole within him as it had ever been ; thus plainly intimating,



that even at that moment, instead of bowing his head and giving up the ghost, he could have stepped down from the cross. "But then how should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" When the centurion saw "that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God." And deeply is it to be regretted that Christian divines, and masters in our Israel, should adopt systems of theology, or rather negations of all system, which compel them to deny a fact so clearly evinced to the centurion by the evidence of his own senses, as to draw from him this confession,—a confession which the Holy Ghost has thought good to record for our conviction, that this MAN freely gave up, for the redemption of a lost world, a life which neither earth nor hell could wring from him, and over which death had no power, and which at the very moment of giving it, he could have retained had he chosen so to do. And the completeness of his death is also to be remarked. They who were crucified with him were not so clearly and undoubtedly dead, as to render the breaking of their legs an unnecessary ceremony. But Jesus was so evidently dead that not a bone of him was broken ; for when the soldiers "came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs." And Pilate wondered at his being dead so soon, for when Joseph of Arimathea begged his body, it is said "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead." How much more would he have marvelled, had he seen what the centurion saw ; had

he seen Jesus at one moment crying out "It is finished," with a "loud voice," and seen him the next moment so certainly and so unquestionably dead that even the soldiers noticed it, and brake not his legs? And yet we are most dogmatically called upon to deny the very facts which awakened the wonder both of Pilate and the Centurion, and to say this was the death, not of the Son of God, who, from love to the Father, and in obedience to his command, gave up his life freely, but the death of a fallen sinful man, who died by the common property of flesh to die. This new gospel I believe not, nor in the face of such evidence, can believe. I believe that on the cross, Christ defeated the powers of darkness, and that by death he destroyed them. He laid down his life of his own accord, in order to shew that he had a power which no created being can ever possess, power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. He laid it down that he might be Lord of the quick and the dead. He laid it down that death, as well as life, might be subservient to the happiness and glory of his people, and that they might have nothing to fear from the former, more than from the latter. He laid it down that he might be able to address his Church in this cheering language, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death."

And is it possible, in the face of such facts as these, to believe that this suffering conqueror had

in him any thing whatever, which could justify the application to him of the terms fallen, and sinful ? It was essentially necessary that he who was to deliver others from their sins, should himself be perfectly free from any thing to which such terms could have the remotest application. And it was necessary that we should have the clearest and most decisive evidence of this ; for upon the certainty that Christ was not fallen or sinful, depends the reality of the atonement, and the certainty of all our hopes. And never was any thing so severely tried, and never was any testimony so decisive as that which proves the total and perfect sinlessness of the Man Christ Jesus, at all times, and in all respects. The traitor who betrayed him pronounced him innocent. His accusers he could boldly challenge to convince him of sin. The sentence of the judge who doomed him to the cross was, “ I find no fault in him ; I will scourge him and let him go.” Much guilt however might have been in him, which no mortal eye could detect ; and in a matter in which we are so deeply and vitally concerned, much stronger evidence than that of the Jews and of Pilate was necessary ; and much stronger evidence is given. The justice of God assailed him, armed with all the demands of a violated law, saying, “ pay me that thou owest.” The debt was paid, the penalty was endured, every demand was satisfied, and divine justice retired, saying, ‘ I find no fault in him ; I have scourged him with every stripe due to an apostate world ; let him go.’ The powers of darkness

were let loose upon him, to try if their malice could find aught in him with which they might claim alliance, or on which they might ground the slightest charge against him ; and after efforts the power of which we can little apprehend, they fled baffled away, howling out in anguish their own hopeless doom, while forced to say, ‘ We find no fault in him ; we have scourged him with worse than scorpion’s stings, and have been compelled to let him go.’ And while heaven, and earth, and hell are thus proclaiming to us the entire and perfect sinlessness of God’s holy child Jesus, and pouring on our hearts the resistless conviction, that in him was no fault,—nothing which the inexorable justice of heaven could condemn, and nothing on which even the unmitigated malice of hell could lay hold, who are they who dare to come forward and tell us, that had they been at the fiery trial, they could have found something sinful in him, and could have proved that if he had never been led into actual sin, it was from no want of inclination, from no absence of a sinful disposition, for that all the propensities of fallen man were as truly and as strongly in him as they are in us ?—who tell us that while our Lord teaches us to pray that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, he himself was far from exemplifying that petition ; for he obeyed, if indeed he did obey, not from filial love, and with the feeling of delight, as the angels do in heaven, but from that compulsion which makes even the devils, against their will, pro-

mote the purposes of God,—that in his manhood he obeyed, not, as he himself declares, because it was his meat and his drink so to do, but because ‘the will of the Spirit *enforced* the flesh to do it *unwilling* service.’ Who are they who, in a Christian land, venture to utter such daring impieties, and that too under the name of Christian doctrines? and who tell us that when our Lord gave up the ghost, it was not the ineffable goodness of God purchasing his Church with his own blood, but the weakness of fallen manhood sinking beneath the oppression of superior force? and who, when they have cast the most unjust reproach upon the flesh of Christ, extend that reproach, in the most unmeasured terms to all who are zealous in defending his honour? And who can listen to such impieties, without exclaiming, in the language of *Gregory Nazianzen*, ‘I am filled with grief and anger,—and would that ye could sympathize with me,—on account of my Christ, when I see my Christ dishonoured for that very reason for which he should be honoured most. For tell me, is he unworthy of honour, because he was humbled for thee? Is he therefore a creature, because he careth for the creature?’<sup>1</sup> Who are they who come forward to astound the world with the portentous novelty, that, from his cradle to his cross, the humanity of

<sup>1</sup> Θυμον πληρουμαι και λυπης επι τω εμω χριστω, συμπασχοιτε δε και υμεις, εαν ιδω δια τουτο αλιμαζομενον μου τον χριστον, δι’ ο μαλιστα λιμασθαι δικαιος ην. Δια τουτο γαρ αλιμος, ειπε μοι, ελ, δια σε ταπεινος; δια τουτο κλισμα, ελ του κλισματος κηδεσθαι; κ. λ. λ. *Sermon xxxi.*



Christ was fallen, sinful humanity,—a tenet only not ludicrous from its complicated absurdity, because its total subversion of every hope which the Gospel affords, compels us to regard it with a very different feeling—and who unsparingly doom to perdition all who dare to deny that which the voice of heaven, and of earth, and of hell, alike compels us to deny? And where have they learned that when the “Second man,” who is the “Lord from heaven,” came to accomplish a work of incomparable greater difficulty than that which was assigned to the “First man,” who was “of the earth, earthy,” he was not sent forth to his work with all the immaculate purity, and spotless holiness with which the first man was endued? This question indeed they will very readily answer: and with as unhesitating and unfaltering an accent, as if they were giving utterance to a truth, of which no man can be ignorant, and which no man can deny, and which does not even need any proof, they can tell us, and that in the face of evidence the most ample, the most direct, and the most decisive, that this has been the doctrine of the Church in all ages. Now I most distinctly assert that the Church never in any age either believed or taught that the humanity of Christ was fallen, sinful humanity; and in asserting this, I am asserting no more than that the Church never renounced Christianity. This is not the place to produce the proof of this assertion, but ample proof of it shall be given in the sequel. In the mean time I think enough has been stated to

shew that the death of Christ was perfectly voluntary at the moment when it took place, and that his own declaration, "No man taketh my life from me," remains an undeniable truth. We must therefore, on looking to Christ as our King, not only reject as a groundless vision, but explode as a fatal heresy, the tenet, that when the Word was made flesh, he became fallen, sinful flesh.

It may be proper here to notice one or two of the consequences of this tenet, as they affect the regal character of Christ. If his death was involuntary,—if he died 'by the common property of flesh to die, because it was accursed in the loins of our first parents,' then it is as clear as the light of day, that the Godhead had withdrawn from our Lord *previous* to his death; for I suppose the most hardy maintainer of the new theology will hesitate to assert, that had he been sustained by all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, he could have died by any violence that either men or devils were capable of inflicting,—could have died *βιοσφαγως*, as it is strongly expressed by Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> or could have met with any assault which he was not able to repel. It will surely not be maintained, that death and Satan overcame God on the cross. The Godhead must therefore have been withdrawn, and our Lord forsaken, not simply as to personal comfort, but as to

<sup>1</sup> Οὐκ αναγκαιως αφηκε την ζωην, ουδε βιοσφαγως ανεζηθη. *He gave not up his life by necessity, neither by violence was it taken away; for hear what he himself saith, "I have power to lay down my life, &c."* Catechesis. xiii. 3.

effectual support, *before* he died. And whether the Godhead voluntarily withdrew from him, and left him the helpless victim of death ; or was forcibly expelled from him, these consequences are obvious, that his death was no atonement, and his resurrection no pledge whatever of ours.<sup>1</sup> His death could be no atonement for sin, for an involuntary atonement is very nearly a contradiction in terms, and was never maintained by any one that I ever heard of. Even the heathens held it an unpropitious omen, if the animal sacrificed had to be dragged reluctantly to the altar. Moreover the presence of the Divinity was essentially necessary to the “Lamb of God,” in order to sustain him under the pressure of sufferings which, without such Almighty support, no mere man could have endured ; and also to give to his sacrifice that dignity and value which it could not otherwise possess. Besides, if the Divinity were withdrawn from Jesus before his death,—as, I repeat, it must have been, if his death was not voluntary—then it was not the Lord’s Christ that died ; he was reduced

<sup>1</sup> It has indeed been very distinctly maintained, that there was no Divinity in Christ, that in him the Divinity was emptied of itself, that he brought to earth a Godhead person, but no Godhead properties. But this limiting of the Godhead, this separation of a Godhead person from Godhead properties, as I have already had occasion to remark, goes so very directly and immediately to the establishment of arianism, that one may hope that it was hastily—though repeatedly—put down, in the desperate attempt to support a monstrous dogma, without adverting to its real character. We shall probably hear no more of it ; and perhaps we may hope that when it is withdrawn, it will also be seen and admitted, that that can be no Christian doctrine, the defence of which could suggest such an argument, or which such an argument is capable of supporting.

to the condition of a mere man. His death could be no sacrifice for sin, because in him, as in us, it was a debt due to nature, which he could no more avoid paying than we can. But it could not be both a debt due to nature, and also a price freely paid for our redemption. Indeed the new theology utterly rejects the very expression as a low *huskering* contract. Christ was bound to die at any rate, as well as we are, and for the same reason, the sinfulness of his nature; and was chosen to carry away our sins with him, into the land of forgetfulness, upon some principle of which I know nothing, can find no intimation in the Bible, can hear no tidings in the Church, and can form not the most distant conception. As to life being restored to him, if it be true that he was fallen and sinful, and died because he was so, then I see not how God could restore his life to him, upon any principle upon which he might not as justly and as properly have restored it at once to Adam, when *he* became fallen and sinful.

If his death was involuntary, then his resurrection is no pledge of ours : for if the Divinity was separated from him,—and that it was separated from his dead body, has been distinctly maintained—then Christ was never buried and never rose. Jesus of Nazareth was buried, and was raised up by the power of God ; but the Lord's Christ rose not. And we can derive no information, and no more hope from the resurrection of Jesus, than we can derive from the resurrection of Lazarus, or of Jairus' daughter, or

of any other who was raised from the dead. That it is not an impossible thing for God to raise the dead these instances teach us ; and that of Jesus teaches us no more. That he who is our head is *the resurrection* and *the Life*, and that therefore the dead in Christ shall rise to the possession of that life which is hid with Christ in God, it teaches not, for Christ never rose.

Now this is just a revival of the old doctrine of the Gnostics. They made a distinction between *Jesus* and *Christ*. Jesus they maintained to be a mere man,—many of them, indeed, that he was only a phantom—that Christ descended upon him at his baptism, and left him when he was affixed to the cross. In this way they completely evacuated the doctrine of the resurrection, a doctrine which they denied. They were willing enough to admit, with the modern Socinian, that *Jesus* was raised up from the dead. The resurrection of *Christ* they denied ; and the Catholic writers easily saw, what indeed the Gnostic did not attempt to conceal, that while the resurrection of *Christ* was denied, the resurrection of *Jesus* proved nothing whatever as to a general resurrection. Now to maintain that the death of our Lord was not perfectly voluntary, at the moment when it took place, is just to teach, as clearly as any Gnostic ever taught, that the Divinity was separated from him at that time, and thus effectually to destroy both the atonement and the doctrine of the resurrection, for “ If *Christ* be not raised, your faith



is vain ; ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection of *Jesus* is no security that we shall rise.

Again, if the death of Christ was involuntary, if he was a fallen sinful man, and died because he was so, then the doctrine of Imputation, as it has been always held by the Church, is a mere human figment, having no place whatever in the scheme of human redemption. According to the commonly received Theology, there is an imputation of the believer's guilt to Christ, who endured its penalty ; and a transference of Christ's righteousness to the believer. The sufferings of Christ are considered as being entirely vicarious, and therefore entirely voluntary. We were in debt ; he paid it. We were in bondage ; he gave the ransom. We were slaves, and he purchased us with his own blood ! The matter may be illustrated thus,—A rebel is taken, tried and condemned. As he is led out to punishment, the King's son,—the heir of his crown, steps forward and proposes to purchase the life and liberty of the rebel, by having the sentence transferred to himself, and consenting to undergo its infliction. His father consents, and his offer being accepted, the law has the same hold upon him that it had upon the rebel, while upon the latter it ceases to have any farther claim. And though it be now his own Son upon whom the sentence is to be inflicted, the King abates not one iota of its severity, but causes it to be carried into execution to its fullest extent. This shews on the part both of the Father and the Son, how highly they prize the safety

of the rebel. It shews the unpardonable guilt of rebellion, that even the heir to the throne cannot deliver the rebel otherwise than by undergoing his sentence. It shews the majesty of the government, and the sanctity of the law in a much more striking manner, than the death of the rebel himself could have done, when the King's Son is spared nothing of what the rebel was doomed to bear.

This view of substitution the new theology characterizes as a destructive falsehood, and says that in this case the King's Son dies by a legal fiction,—he is treated as that which in reality he is not, and the king who so treats him is a king of fictions, a king of make-believes. The King's Son cannot in this case justly die for the rebel, because he is not in reality under condemnation. The law has no hold upon him but by a legal fiction, and to exact from him the penalty due to the rebel would be to treat him as being that which he is not. If, then, he wishes to die for the rebel, he must give the law exactly the same hold upon him, that it has upon the rebel. And this he can only do by becoming what the rebel is. He must raise a rebellion against his Father,—must withdraw from their allegiance as many subjects as the rebel has withdrawn,—must slay as many faithful subjects as the rebel has slain,—must create as much devastation and misery in the kingdom, as the rebel has created ; and then he is in a condition to die for the rebel. Then the law has a real, not a fictitious hold upon him,—then when he

has placed himself exactly in the situation of the rebel,—not by voluntarily consenting to be considered and treated as standing in that situation, but by voluntarily consenting actually to become a rebel, then he may die, nay, he must die. It was in his own power to determine whether he would place himself in this situation or not ; but having agreed to place himself in it, he can no longer choose whether he will die or not. He might choose whether he would give the law not a fictitious but a real hold upon him or not ; but having given it that hold, he can no longer choose whether he will submit to its sentence or not. He stands before it in all the helplessness of one who does not voluntarily bind himself to endure its sentence, though he has never deserved it, but who has voluntarily consented to place himself in a situation in which it has a hold upon him, and will inflict its sentence upon him, whether he choose or not.

This is the new theory of imputation which is connected with the tenet that Christ as a fallen sinful man, died by the common property of flesh to die, and not merely because he voluntarily bore the penalty of our sins, without having any connection with their guilt. Now upon this theory I would remark, in the first place, that it actually involves the fiction which it is professedly got up to avoid. The rebellion of the son against his father, arises from no discontentment with his father's government, and no dislike to his father's person, and no dis-

satisfaction with his father's measures ; but is got up simply with the view of qualifying himself for legal execution. There is in fact all the while no rebellion. It may produce all the miseries of rebellion, but it is a mere pretence of rebellion, designed for a very different purpose than that of dethroning the king, or compelling him to change his measures. Its sole design is to fit the son for being punished instead of him who really rebelled, and the fiction accordingly remains in all its force. I would remark next, that in this case, if it can be proved against the son, that there is one atrocity for which the rebel, whom he wishes to save, has been condemned, of which he has not made himself guilty, then so far his substitution fails,—the law cannot, but by a legal fiction, exact of him *all* the claims that it has against the rebel, but only those of which he has made himself really guilty. The father knows very well that his son is not really intending to endanger his government, and that he need take no steps to oppose his pretended rebellion. He has only to watch and see that his son makes himself guilty up to the proper extent, lest he should inflict upon him more than he has really earned ; and then he knows that his son will of his own accord, deliver himself up to justice. To fit him for becoming the rebel's substitute, he must be careful to make himself guilty up to the full extent of the rebel's criminality. Now the result of this theory when applied to Christ, is just this, that if there be one sinner on earth more guilty than he was, more

widely alienated from God than he was, more deeply enslaved by the devil, the world, and the flesh, than he was, then that is a sinner whom Christ cannot save,—the penalty of whose crimes the law cannot exact of him, without a legal fiction,—without making God a god of fictions and make-believes. I remark finally, on this theory of substitution, that besides the blasphemy of making Christ a sinner, up to the utmost limits of human criminality,—for he cannot, without a legal fiction, endure the penalty of, or forgive, any sin that he has not committed,—it renders substitution not a ‘precious truth,’—as our new theologians, in their own view of it, admit it to be,—but a complete non-entity. There is no such thing as substitution. When he has committed the guilt, that he may be able to die for it, without a legal fiction, he then surely dies for his own guilt, and not by the imputation of ours. All the lessons taught by redemption too, on this theory, utterly fail to be taught; and again the question recurs, (the question to which neither revelation, in this view of it, has furnished, nor reason can discover an answer,) why, unless as a blot in creation,—as a monument of any thing rather than the perfections of God, was such a being as man made, and such a work as redemption appointed?

Such are some of the fatal consequences resulting from the doctrine that our King was no king in his death, that that death was not perfectly voluntary at the moment when it took place, but that he died by



the common property of flesh to die. Nor are these consequences wrung, by remote inference from the new system. They meet us in every page of the writings in which that system is promulgated, and expressed in language stronger by far than I have thought it right to copy. The only objection that I can find urged against the common view of imputation, which I have illustrated above, and which supposes that from the first appointment of Christ, down to the final consummation of the mystery of God, every step that he took, every pang that he endured, was perfectly voluntary on his part, and was inflicted upon him by no desert of his own, is one which Socinians have been in the habit of urging, till, I suppose, they are either wearied with repeating it, or ashamed of its silliness, for they seem to have abandoned it. It is that if God treated Christ as if he had been guilty, while in reality he was not guilty, then he treated him as he had not deserved to be treated; and to represent God as treating his creatures as that which they are not, is to represent him as unjust. Now when we say that God punished Christ, though he had merited no suffering, we do not represent him as considering Christ to be what he was not. He considered him to be, and acted toward him as being, what he really was,—the representative of his people, standing in their place, sustaining their person, but only by substitution, and bearing their iniquities, but only by imputation. I observe farther, that God does not always treat his

creatures according to their deserts. We do not *deserve* that a Saviour should be provided for us ; and yet God has given his Son to die for us. Nor will it avail to say that this was the claim of justice yielding to the entreaty of mercy. Justice, in the Supreme Ruler can never yield to any thing ; and the extension of mercy to fallen man was not only sanctioned, but required by the justice of God ;—not by justice toward *us*, who might very justly have been left to perish, but by justice toward *himself*, and toward all his unfallen creatures, that he might, for his own glory and their happiness, vindicate the perfections which the fall of angels and of men seemed to bring into doubt. Justice required that vindication. That *we* were chosen as the beings through whose redemption that vindication should be effected, was no *deserving* of ours. The Socinian objection therefore rests upon both a contracted and a perverted view of the Divine justice. But the objection is an infinitely worse thing in the mouths of the new theologians, than it is in the mouth of a Socinian. He means to deny the imputation of our sins to Christ in any sense, being fully aware that if that imputation were the ground of Christ's death at all, it must be the sole ground of it ; while they maintain imputation, and urge the objection for the purpose of shewing, that there was much more in the death of Christ than his merely consenting to bear the punishment of our iniquities,—for the purpose of proving that if God treated him as a sinner, while in

reality he was no sinner, then he was treating him as that which he was not, and in so doing was acting unjustly,—was a God of fictions and make-believes. And this appears to me to be much worse than Socinianism. Yet for the whole unmitigated weight of these fearful consequences, must that system be held responsible, which teaches that when the Eternal Word became man, he became a fallen, sinful man, and had no longer the power to choose whether he would die or not. These consequences may be, and very probably will be denied; but till the whole system out of which they grow be abandoned, there is no evading them.

When it is declared that Christ died by the common property of flesh to die, I would ask, do they who maintain this really believe, that when the Word became man, he ceased to be God? They must mean this, I suppose, when they talk of his being limited,—of his emptying himself of his divinity,—of his bringing a Godhead person into the world, but no Godhead properties. Yet it is perfectly plain, that if he could cease to be God, then he never was God at all. It is therefore very cordially believed by the Church, that when he became what he previously was not, he did not cease to be what he previously was. “Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?” And who is he who saith this, but the Divine Word, who speaks in all the prophets? And was it not as true after his incarnation as before it? To say that when the Word was made flesh, he

was less the Word and the power of God, was less the light and the life of men, less the ruler and Lord of all, than he was before his incarnation, is an impiety which I shall not attempt to characterize. Yet how can they plead guiltless of that impiety who teach us, that in consequence of the fallen, sinful nature which he had assumed, the Word was as incapable of resisting the power of death as we are? —that he, the life of all, was compelled, not merely by the covenant entered into with the Father, not by substitution or imputation only, but by the physical constitution of that humanity which he had assumed, to yield himself a prey to the king of terrors? But there is no ground for the supposition. When he became man, he was not the less God. When he bore hunger and thirst, he was nevertheless shewing, by changing water into wine, and by feeding thousands with a few loaves, that he it was who was indeed supplying the wants of every living thing; and that he endured hunger and thirst from no defect of powers. When he had not where to lay his head, he was not the less “God over all, blessed for ever.” When, wearied, he rested on Jacob’s well, the pillars of heaven, and the foundations of the earth rested securely on his sustaining power. And never did he give so splendid a proof that he was indeed *the Life*, as when he died. For the mystery and the marvel which angels desired to look into was, how he by any possibility could die. Had he been fallen and sinful, and thus incapable of escaping death,

there could have been no mystery, nothing strange in the matter. But they knew not all the extent of his power, they knew not that he had the keys of hell and of death, and that rebelling as they were against heaven, they were still completely subject to him, till they saw him tread the region of mortality, and enter at his own pleasure, unsubdued, unharmed, and as a conqueror, into their dreary domain. Then indeed when he died did they know, and for the first time know, in all the extent of its meaning that he was *the Life*. In the depth of his humiliation he was not less God, nor less powerful and glorious, than in the height of his exaltation. Nay in his death he was giving the most decisive proof of his Godhead; for he was shewing that he possessed a power which no mere creature can ever possess, a power to lay down a life which had been forfeited by no sin, was demanded of him by no law, and could be taken from him by no power. In dying he proved himself to be the Lord of both life and death. When crucified he was still the "Lord of glory," not less, nor, to the intelligent eye, less conspicuously, than when ascending up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. It is justly argued by *Gregory Nysson*,<sup>1</sup> that the humiliation of our Lord, was a much more splendid exhibition of his divine power than the magnitude of the heavens, the splendour of their luminaries, the embellishments of the universe, or the perpetual admiration of all nature.

<sup>1</sup> Cataphetical Oration, chap. xxiv.



If this view be correct,—and if it be not, the church in every age has been miserably deceived—then it is clear that all the hosts of hell could never have overpowered Christ, could never have borne down to the grave that flesh in which he did not dwell, with which he did not associate, but which was HIS OWN FLESH,—HIMSELF—as much as his divinity is his own—or himself. Nor, when they assailed him, did he consent to die, till he had repelled their utmost hostility, and sent them conquered away ; and then, and not till then, did he descend into the tomb, as freely and as voluntarily as he shortly afterwards ascended up on high.

To the fact that Christ died by no necessity of nature, but because he pleased so to do, to shew his love to the Father, a fact established by such overwhelming evidence, there is only one objection that I recollect, which requires any notice. Nor would that require any notice either ; only I observe that it is insisted upon, and silly things are sufficient to influence silly people. It is this, that man is by nature mortal, and therefore if Christ did not become mortal, and as liable to death as we are, then he did not become truly and completely man. To this objection, I shall reply in the words of two antient writers. The first is *Theophilus*, bishop of Antioch in the second century, who thus treats the question,—‘ But some will say, was man made mortal by nature ? By no means. What then, immortal ? Neither do we say this. Was he then made nothing ? Nor this

either do we say. But I say he was made neither mortal nor immortal. For if he had made him immortal from the beginning, he would have made him a god. Again, if he had made him mortal, God would have seemed to be the cause of his death. He made him therefore neither mortal nor immortal, but, as I said above, capable of both, that he might gradually attain immortality, keeping the commandment of God, and receiving from him the reward of immortality, might become aged ; but if he should turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he might be to himself the cause of death.’<sup>1</sup>

But I know of no writer who has treated this question either so largely or so well, as *Anselm*, who was archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century. In a dialogue with his friend *Boso*, the latter comes upon the question of our Lord’s mortality, not seeing clearly how he could die, if he were not mortal as other men. In reply to this, Anselm, after observing that men would have been truly men though they had never fallen or died,—that mortality is not essential to human nature, else man could never become immortal,—that corruptibility, and incorruptibility belong not to the nature, as they neither make nor destroy it, thus proceeds—‘ But because there is no man who does not die, therefore ‘ mortal ’ is put into the definition of man, by philosophers who did not believe that the whole man ever was, or is, capable of becoming immortal. Wherefore, when you

<sup>1</sup> To Autolyens. book ii.

have proved him to be truly a man, this is no sufficient proof that he was mortal. *Boso*. Seek you then some other reason by which it may be proved that he was capable of dying ; for I know none, if you know not. *Anselm*. There can be no doubt that, being God, he must be omnipotent. *B*. True. *A*. If, then, he chooses, he must be able to lay down his life, and to take it again. *B*. If he cannot do this, it does not appear that he is omnipotent. *A*. He will be able therefore, never to die, if he so pleases ; and he will also be able to die, and to rise again. But whether he lay down his life, without the interference of any other, or whether some other, by his own permission, cause that he lay it down, makes no difference, as far as his power is concerned. *B*. That is clear. *A*. If, then, he be pleased to permit, he may be slain ; and if he do not choose to permit, he cannot be slain. *B*. To this conclusion, reason inevitably leads us. *A*. Reason also teaches us, that he must have something greater than any thing that is below God, which he may give to God, not as a debt, but of his own accord. *B*. It does so. *A*. But this cannot be found, either below himself, or out of himself. *B*. True. *A*. It must therefore be found in himself,' &c.<sup>1</sup> To maintain that our Lord's

<sup>1</sup> In the treatise *Cur Deus homo?* Book II. Chap. xi. Besides his clear view of the mortality of man, it will be seen that, towards the end of the extract, he enters upon a line of argument, which he repeatedly elsewhere takes up, which goes distinctly to shew, that, in his view, that humanity which Christ offered to God, must have been something superior to any thing below God, that is, to any created being. I suppose that on so simple

life was entirely at his own disposal, and never could be taken from him by any power, will not henceforth I hope be considered as a denial that he was as truly and properly a man as we are.

Christ then was King when he was on earth,—a King in the lowest state of his deep humiliation ; and in that very humiliation giving the most splendid and decisive proof of his Omnipotent power. Before proceeding farther, it will be proper to notice the duties which we owe to Christ as our King. In doing this I cannot do better than avail myself of a paper that I wrote upon this subject long ago, and which I shall here nearly copy.

One duty which we owe to Christ as our King, is *to obey his laws*. To neglect this obedience is to deny that he is King. “ Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ? ” He came to save us *from* our sins, and therefore we can have no part in his salvation while we are living in sin. It is not to be doubted that many profess to rely on Christ as their propitiation, who pay no great regard to his laws ; and think themselves perfectly safe,

a matter, on which there can be but few who can contrive to get into error, I shall be readily excused from loading my page with the originals of the above quotations. It is truly painful to see that while such sound and simple views of human nature were held by such early writers, men should be found in the present advanced state of the world’s age, who, swelling with that spirit which “ despises others,” and loudly proclaiming their intimate acquaintance with the Fathers, can yet blunder so grossly. We talk of mortal man, and it would be strange if we did not. But they who can argue upon the word ‘ mortal,’ as if it formed a part of the definition of man, are probably too ignorant to know, how much they have yet to learn.

while living in the habitual neglect of some of his commands ; nay, who are the less careful to avoid sin just on account of the sufficiency of him on whom they profess to rely for its pardon. But we may rest assured that if Christ be not a King whom we obey, neither is he a Priest who will save us. To hope that we can be saved without obedience, is to hope not merely against hope, but against possibility ; for surely it is not possible to be saved from sin, while yet we are living in sin. “ His servants are ye to whom ye obey,” saith the apostle ; and if we obey sin, then it is plain that we are not the servants of Christ. Though our conformity to the laws of Christ be not the cause of our salvation, it may not on that account be neglected ; for it is something more than the cause of salvation, it is the thing itself. When we are made holy, then are we saved, and not till then. Obedience therefore is essentially necessary. Nor is that obedience to be limited by our convenience or our pleasure ; or to be neglected because it may in some instances tend to our disadvantage, or because they whose good opinion we are most anxious to obtain, may call us precise, and narrow-minded, and righteous overmuch ; or because the things that we find it necessary to avoid, are things freely indulged in, even by those who maintain a respectable character in the church. That is no obedience which extends only as far as we find it perfectly convenient. It was not such an obedience that was yielded by the “ cloud of witnesses ” whose



examples are recorded for our imitation. It was not such an obedience that was yielded by Christ for our sakes, when he submitted to "learn obedience by the things which he suffered." Nor was it such obedience that he required of us, when he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me," or when he declared, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Nor are we to suppose that our obligations to obedience are discharged by attention to the positive institutions of Christianity, as they seem to think, who, if they read the Scriptures, and worship God in their families, and attend his public services, and take the sacraments, and maintain a zealous profession, and treat the ordinances of religion with great respect, and contribute to its advancement in the world,—imagine that this is fulfilling their obedience to Christ. They observe with regularity the stated days and hours of religious duties; but when the stated period is past, all thoughts of religion are dismissed, and they are not to be distinguished, by any thing in their conduct, as the disciples of Christ. All these things are necessary to promote in ourselves and others the principles of piety and holiness; but unless they be attended to only as a means to this end, they can be of no service to us. Yet they are often attended to, not as a means of promoting holiness,

but as a substitute for the want of it,—as duties which it is necessary to perform, but from the performance of which we never even look for any growth in grace. Our Lord tells us what will be the sentence of men of this character. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Neither are we to suppose that we have fully obeyed Christ, when, besides attending to all his institutions, we have scrupulously regulated our conduct according to his laws. This is all the obedience that an earthly ruler requires. If we do not resist his laws, he leaves us at liberty to disapprove of them, and openly to express our disapprobation. But it is not so with our heavenly King. He requires us not only to obey his laws, but to approve of them,—to love them. In his eye obedience is of no value, unless it proceed from the heart. Every man does many things that are materially good: but if such good deeds proceed from ostentation, or the prospect of advantage, or the dread of censure, or from any secular motive,—if they do not flow from that charity which predominates in the renewed heart, they are the works of one still “dead in trespasses and sins,” and are properly denominated “dead works.” They want the living principle which alone can render them good in the eye of him who searches the heart; and

however excellent in the outward performance, are earthly and immoral in their motive and design. They are corrupted in their source ; and if the root be rottenness, the blossom can be but dust. Bodily service profiteth nothing ; and our external compliance with a law which we hate in our hearts, is by our King considered as no obedience at all. The reason of this is sufficiently obvious. Our obedience is required that it may do good,—not to God, who needs not our services, but to ourselves ; that it may establish in us such habits as will fit us for the occupations and enjoyments of a higher state of existence. But if it proceed from any improper principle, then its operation will be in direct opposition to this end, and consequently must meet the disapprobation of him “ the end of whose commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” Every action strengthens the principle from which it proceeds ; and, being often repeated, renders the exercise of that principle necessary to our happiness. And when our love to God and man has been so “ rooted and grounded ” in us by a long course of holiness, that the exercise of it constitutes all our felicity, we are then fitted for the kingdom of heaven. Whereas the most perfect obedience, were it possible for such obedience to proceed from any other principle, would not in the slightest degree promote our moral improvement, nor our meetness for the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.

If then we truly acknowledge Christ our King, we shall not be satisfied with offering to him the external expressions of esteem and respect, nor with adding to these expressions a scrupulous attention to his laws in our conduct. We shall not be satisfied unless our thoughts, and feelings, and desires be agreeable to his law, as well as our actions. We shall not consider our salvation from sin complete, while there is one imagination in our heart that exalts itself against him. When every thought of our heart is brought into captivity to Christ,—when we not only approve of his laws, but delight in them,—when we not only consider obedience to be our duty, but feel it to be our pleasure,—when we do not seek excuses for neglecting, but opportunities of obeying his commands,—when we feel such a sense of his kindness to us, as to be delighted with every opportunity of expressing our gratitude, by word or by deed,—then, and not till then, shall we consider our conformity to his law to be such as will give us confidence when we appear before him in judgment, and will prepare us for that vision of God, which communicates to the pure in heart joys that are “unspeakable and full of glory;” but from which the unholy, even supposing them admitted to it, would fly away, and seek a refuge in the regions of darkness, and in the society of spirits more congenial with their own.

Another duty that we owe to our King is *to depend upon his power*. If such an obedience as has been described, be essentially requisite, it may be said,

“ Who then can be saved ? ” Had outward obedience only been necessary, even that is difficult. Still however we can conceive it possible for a man of firm resolution, to regulate his actions by any law, however strict. But who can change the whole current of his thoughts, affections, and desires,—can bring himself to hate and despise what he loves with all his heart,—and to love and delight in all that he is most averse to ? We may abstain from taking vengeance on our enemies, but can we love them that injure us ? We abstain from appropriating to ourselves what does not belong to us ; but, if it be really desirable, who can help desiring it ? “ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? ” Can we make ourselves new creatures ? No. We could as easily have created ourselves at first. But this will by no means form any apology for disobedience. For as the wisdom of our Prophet removes our ignorance, and the sacrifice of our Priest removes our condemnation, so that we are without excuse if we be either ignorant or in a state of alienation from God, in the same manner, the power of our King removes our moral weakness, and endues us with strength to triumph over the foes whom he has conquered, so that we are inexcusable if we remain the servants of sin. To doubt this is to doubt the Redeemer’s sufficiency to perfect his work. It is to say that God has given us a Saviour, who does for us some things that are necessary for our salvation, but leaves other things



equally necessary undone. But to render us personally holy is the very end for which he came ; and it is impious to suppose that he is either unable or unwilling to accomplish it. For which of our enemies is he unable to subdue ? He assures us that he has “ overcome the world ; ” and assures us also that if we believe, we shall overcome it.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his life, and in his death, he conquered Satan, and so conquered him that his fall was perfectly manifest to all. This is strongly denied ; but I hope it has been placed beyond all doubt, both by the direct evidence that has been adduced, and by a view of the fatal consequences that flow from the opposite supposition. Satan therefore is a conquered foe. He can lead us captive no more. If we serve him, it is willingly ; for if we resist him, stedfast in the faith, he will flee from us ; if we be begotten of God, we are enabled by his grace, so to keep ourselves that that wicked one toucheth us not. But then we are tried by the corruptions of our own evil hearts, and how do we know that he can subdue this foe, if he was not himself tried by it as a fallen and sinful man ? How do we know that he can subdue in us, what he never subdued in himself ? I put not these questions foolishly or unnecessarily, foolish and useless as they may seem to be. The argument has been urged in support of the tenet that he was fallen and sinful, that unless he were so, we know that he can subdue two of our foes, the devil and the world,

<sup>1</sup> Sermon on 1 John v. 4.

but do not know that he can subdue the third, that is, the flesh. We do not know, it is said,—Yes, we do know that he can “subdue to himself,” and can conquer the most inveterate corruption of our nature. We know it from many very decisive texts of Scripture. We know it, because if he has subdued the sources of corruption, he can subdue the corruption itself,—if he has bound the strong man, he can spoil him of his goods. We know it from the fact that he has actually renewed, and sanctified, and saved thousands. But upon this point especially, I beg to refer the reader to the Sermon which concludes the first part of this treatise, where he will find the sympathy of Christ with the believer, in all his temptations, treated in a manner which, I think, must give him the most perfect satisfaction with regard to both the reality and the depth of that sympathy. At least, if it do not satisfy him, I should feel it altogether hopeless to attempt giving him satisfaction. But the argument, that we know not that Christ can subdue in us the propensities of the fallen manhood, if he never subdued them in himself, I shall have occasion more particularly to notice, and to show that it not only removes the foundation of every duty which we owe to Christ as our King, but makes him undeniably guilty of both original and actual sin, when I come to discuss in the sequel, the testimony of Lactantius. In the mean time I observe, that the power of our King, upon which we are called to depend, completely destroys

every apology for disobedience that may be drawn from the weakness and depravity of our nature. We cannot be allowed to adopt the impious language of the Israelites, "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" This we are very ready to do, and to say, God has given us such propensities, and therefore cannot condemn us for indulging them. But the heart repels the argument even at the moment when the lips are giving it utterance. And the Gospel proves its futility, by directing us to the strength which our King gives. If indeed we attempt to subdue these propensities by our own power, without daily seeking his aid, then to a certainty our weakness will be proved by our failure. We shall never be able to make to ourselves a new heart and a new spirit, as we are commanded to do, unless we derive power from him. And as the renovation of the heart is a gradual thing, the grace that enables us to do it must be sought from him daily. The soul is as dependant upon him as the body, and it is, like the body, limited in its capacity; and neither will he give, nor are we capable of receiving, at once, a degree of grace sufficient to serve us for a life time, any more than we are capable of receiving at once, a quantity of nourishment that may be sufficient to sustain our bodies for a life-time. The soul needs its daily bread, not less than the body.

But then we know that our King is ever ready to bestow upon us the grace and the power that may be

necessary for the supply of our present wants. We are assured of this by his own holy word, and by the fact that to many has he given,—to many who wait upon him, is he now giving that continual supply. The prophets, apostles, and martyrs, were just such men as we are,—as corrupted and as weak by nature ; and as incapable of doing or thinking any thing good of themselves. “By the grace of God, I am what I am,” said Paul, and all that are now in the kingdom of heaven will readily admit, nay glory to record, that it was the grace of God alone that fitted them for that happy state, and with feelings of heartfelt gratitude will say,—“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.” Now we have the same access to the fountain of wisdom and power that they had : and if we be equally diligent in seeking, we have no room whatever to doubt, that we shall be equally successful in obtaining. “The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that he cannot save ; nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear.” He who commands our obedience knows well our weakness. He issues his commands notwithstanding ; because he has put into our hands the means of obtaining power, so that we are inexcusable if we obey not. He who is conscious of his own weakness, if he really wishes to succeed in being delivered from the power of sin, will habitually rely upon the power of the Saviour. He will meet temptations as David met Goliath, “In the name of the Lord,” knowing

that the reason why so many fail, is, because they forget that their strength comes from above, and therefore are not sufficiently diligent and earnest in seeking it. When we leave off communion with him, or, what is the same thing, when our prayers degenerate into cold formality, we necessarily lose our strength, and become as a branch cut off from the trunk, from which it derived all its fruitfulness. He never gives us so much power as to render us independent upon his daily aid. We therefore err dangerously, when we attempt to make any progress in the Christian life, without doing so in entire dependence upon his aid, who alone is King over all our foes. The example of Peter should teach even the best not to be too confident in their own powers, and should make "him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Since our power is in the hands of our King alone, we ought equally to avoid despondency and presumption. We ought never to fear any temptation that we meet with in the path of duty, being confident that he will never call us to any duty without giving us strength to perform it. To avoid a trial to which we are plainly called, is to distrust either the truth or the power of our Saviour. And he who, in the strength of the Son of Man, shrinks not from encountering a fiery furnace, or a den of lions, will always find that he has chosen a safer path than he, who, like Jonah, endeavours to escape a disagreeable duty. But we ought, on the other



hand, always to avoid temptations, when we can do so consistently with our duty; for our King has promised no assistance to those who rashly run into danger that he calls them not to meet. Our Lord himself has taught us this by his own example. He would neither, on the one hand, distrust God, by changing stones into bread; nor, on the other, tempt him, by needlessly throwing himself from the top of the temple. And the Israelites afford us an example of both errors. When God commanded them to enter in and possess the land of Canaan, they distrusted him and refused to go; and then their presumption rose in proportion to their former despondency, and they went up, in opposition to his command, and were defeated. If we own Christ as our King, then let us obey him, neither doubting his power to carry on unto perfection the work of our sanctification; nor yet making that power a pretence for our own want of care and vigilance, by expecting it to deliver us from the effects of our own rashness and presumption, or to carry us onward in our heaven-ward course, while we are not labouring to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Another duty which we owe to our King is, *to confide in his goodness*. It is for the purpose of delivering us out of the hand of all our enemies, and of promoting our welfare, that the Mediator is exalted to the throne of the universe, and appointed the sole disposer of every event in which we are concerned.

We cannot for a moment doubt that he is abundantly able to give us every thing necessary for our happiness. He may indeed take such steps with regard to us, as may, in our superficial view, be calculated to subvert, rather than promote our welfare. But we may surely believe, that, as he is wiser than we are, and knows much better than we do what is proper for us, so he is also full of goodness, and can derive no pleasure from our pains, and will therefore never require us to do, or to suffer any thing that is not for our profit. It is the duty of a King to protect his subjects ; and we cannot without impiety doubt that Christ will perform his duty. After all the proofs of kindness which he has given, nothing can be more offensive than still to distrust him. He has given us these proofs of his love to little purpose, if we “ faint when we are rebuked of him,” and, when he tries us, presently conclude that he has forsaken us. This is a sin for which Israel was often reprovèd. “ Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God ? ” “ But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” And surely, if we distrust our King, who assumed our nature, and submitted to our infirmities, that we might be the more certainly assured of his sympathy, we can have less excuse than Israel had. There is

no duty more frequently inculcated upon us than this, of confiding in the goodness of our Ruler,—none of which more examples are recorded for our imitation. If then, we should be placed in a situation, in which our hearts are ready to fail, let us think of these examples ;—of Abraham, who “ staggered not at the promise of God,” however unlikely its fulfilment appeared ;—of David who when in distress, still said, “ When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up ;—of Asaph, who, when tempted to suspect that the mercy of God was clean gone, that his promise had failed, and that he had forgotten to be gracious, yet, in the end said, “ This is my infirmity ; ”—of the apostles, who, though tried with so many evils, yet never questioned the faithfulness or goodness of their King, but could all adopt the language of Paul, “ I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If, therefore, we be visited with severe trials, let us not hastily say with Jacob, “ All these things are against us ; ” for, if our distrust do not lead us to take improper means to escape from them, we shall find that all these things are, in reality, working together for our good. If we knew that an earthly king, or any man of great power, loved us with all the affection of a brother, we should feel perfectly secure with regard to

all the events of life. We may surely place at least as much confidence in him, who, though King of kings, and Lord of lords, yet is “a friend who sticketh closer than a brother.” On the mountain of transfiguration, Peter said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here,” and there he wished to build tabernacles for a permanent abode. But the Lord, who knew much better than Peter what was good for them, knew well that that state of enjoyment was not good, as a permanent condition in this world, but good only as an encouragement to fit them for sustaining the labours and trials, which are necessary for man here below. And nobly did they prove, in their after conduct, how well they had learned the lesson; with what a simple and unreserved faith they could commit themselves to Christ, for time and for eternity. Destitute of every earthly comfort, they were yet the happiest of men. Look at Tiberius, with all the resources of the Roman Empire at his command, apparently free from any thing that could give him the slightest uneasiness, yet writing to their Senate in such terms as these,—“Conscript fathers, what I should write to you at this time, or how I should write, or what I should not write, may all the gods confound me, worse than I feel that I am already confounded, if I can tell.”<sup>1</sup> Look on the other hand to the Apostles, treated as the “offscourings

<sup>1</sup> Quid scribam vobis, patres conscripti, aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, Dii me deæque pejus perdant, quam perire me quotidie sentio, si scio. *Taciti Annal.* Lib. vi. Cap. 6.

of all things," "set forth *last* as a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to man;" how completely they were fortified against all the assaults of this world; look, for example, to Paul and Silas, thrust, in a strange city, into the innermost prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. Can men be placed in more depressing circumstances? Truly, if in this world only they had hope, they would have been, of all men, most miserable. Yet while the Roman Emperor was trembling, he knew not why, upon his throne, their feelings burst forth in songs of thanksgiving and praise. Is there on record a more delightful, or a more affecting proof of the happiness of being able completely to detach ourselves from this world, and commit ourselves to the care and keeping of our King than this?—"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." I cannot dwell upon the subject, and therefore can only say, that if we possess not the same power of rejoicing in the Lord, under the most adverse circumstances, it is simply because we do not live up to our privileges; do not detach ourselves as completely as they did, from all dependence upon the world; but live only partly by faith, and partly by sight. That this is unreasonable, how difficult soever it may be for us depraved creatures to escape it, is easily proved. We can trust Christ with our immortal souls, and with our eternal concerns; is it not then unreasonable to refuse to trust him with our temporal interests? We profess



to rely upon Christ to assign us our eternal abode by the river of the water of life, and to feed us with the fruits of the tree of life ; and we profess to believe that all the vivifying and cheering efficacy of that river, and of these fruits, is derived from him alone ; and yet we can fear, and doubt, and distrust him with regard to matters of infinitely inferior importance ! When Peter, after being called to come to our Lord on the water, began to sink, and cried out in terror, he met with the just rebuke, “ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? ” How often do we still more deeply deserve the same rebuke ! A want of that simple, unhesitating reliance upon the power and faithfulness of our King, forms one or the most effectual impediments in the way both of our comfort, and of our advancement in the Christian life.

Another duty that we owe to our King is, *to preserve the peace of his kingdom*. In all kingdoms, men are restrained, by proper laws, from invading the person, property, or reputation of others : and without such laws no community could exist. And wherever these laws are disregarded, and men are divided into factions and parties, it is obvious to every one how much the strength of that kingdom must be weakened. The subjects of Christ's kingdom are commanded to love one another, and that even as Christ has loved them. Had this law been always acted upon, it is not easy to estimate the happiness of the effect that would have been produced. And

the miserable effects that proceed from the dissensions among Christ's subjects, and the weakness that has been introduced into his kingdom, by its being divided into so many different parties, need not be pointed out. Christ's kingdom has thus been rent, and its peace destroyed by the pride of men, who, having exalted their own opinion, upon some indifferent matter, into an article of fundamental importance, have renounced the communion of all who refuse to adopt the same notion. And whenever communion among Christians is broken off, a heavy weight of guilt attaches to that party which causes the schism. In order to avoid this guilt, every disciple of Jesus ought to be very cautious in refusing to hold communion with a fellow-subject, lest, when both parties stand before their King, this refusal be decided to have proceeded from no sufficient cause. Even the errors of Christians afford no just ground of separating from their communion, excepting in one of these two cases,—either when they err fundamentally, and, by so doing, cease to be Christians ; in which case their communion is in reality no communion, and in renouncing it we make no schism ;—or when, supposing their errors to be of a less important nature, they require us distinctly and formally to profess our approbation of those errors, against our own convictions ; in which case we cannot hold communion with them, without being hypocrites, and are bound to separate from them ; but the guilt of the schism rests with them. But to separate from

the communion of men whom we believe to be true Christians, merely because on some points of inferior moment, they maintain opinions different from our own,—while they do not require us to adopt, or profess these opinions,—is a degree of presumption and arrogance which it is hard to reconcile with the spirit of genuine Christianity. Surely he has much need to inquire what he can offer to his judge as an apology for his conduct, who has burst asunder the Redeemer's perfect bond of charity, and cast away that cord of love, by which the great head of the church has united all the different members of his mystical body in the closest intimacy ; who has, by his conduct, declared, that unless he himself be the head, he will be no part of the body ; and who, refusing to acknowledge the disciples of Christ as his fellow-subjects, has renounced their communion, unless they would renounce every opinion which he does not approve, and adopt, on his authority, terms of communion which Christ never appointed.

The peace and unity of Christ's kingdom are infringed not merely by the open interruption of communion among his subjects, but in a way no less offensive by those who, while they maintain external communion, are not at all united in spirit, but entertain toward each other the most unchristian feelings. It is a fearful thing to see men sitting down at the same communion table, who entertain toward each other feelings so hostile, that they would refuse to exchange the common courtesies of civil life, or to sit down

together at the same board of common hospitality. Shall we eat the body, and drink the blood of our crucified Redeemer with men, with whom we would not participate at the same table, in the common bounties of providence, and yet be guiltless? Impossible. For what, in this case, is our external communion? It is the solemn profession of a falsehood,—a profession, before God, that we love as brethren, for whom we are ready, if need be, to lay down our lives, those whom in reality we are regarding with feelings of enmity and bitterness. We ought to remember that the Church, like the grave, levels all ranks, and extinguishes all human distinctions. “The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master:” and unless we can repress every feeling inconsistent with this truth, and enter the Church with all the cordiality of affection for our fellow-worshippers, we ought not to enter it at all; nor profess our *unity* with those, with whom we are perhaps in a state of active enmity.

The peace of Christ’s kingdom is also often disturbed, and a way prepared for endless divisions, by the manner in which disputes about controverted points are managed. There is no impropriety in discussing the doctrines of Christianity. Much advantage may be derived from such discussion. But then the discussion ought to be conducted upon Christian principles. To quote from an opponent language that he never used, for the purpose of burdening him with the guilt of impieties which he

can appeal to God that he never either entertained or uttered,—to attach to his language, even when fairly quoted, a meaning which it is perfectly clear that it was never intended to express, nor, by any fair construction can be made to express,—to manufacture quotations out of respectable, but not easily accessible writers, in order to make them appear to support tenets which they most cordially detest and most unequivocally condemn, are arts which so completely outrage, I say not Christian principle, but common honesty and common decency, that even the most virulent Sectarianism has but rarely stooped to employ them. As the number of those who can adopt such arts, can be but small, in any age, I need not stop to shew how utterly inconsistent they are with the peace of Christ's kingdom. A more frequent error in this way is to advance our opinions, not with the firmness of men confident in the truth, but with an arrogance of dogmatism, and an implied, if not expressed contempt of all others ; as if truth had never visited the earth till we brought it, which associates our opinions, even if correct, with a feeling of disgust ; and which, if they happen to be the result of the most palpable and astounding ignorance, deepens that disgust to a pitch which it is useless to attempt to express. It is doubtless men who thus force their tenets upon us, whom the apostle has in his eye, when, exhorting us to be at peace with all men, he annexes the conditions,—“ if it be possible ” and “ as far as in you lieth,” well knowing



that when we are imperiously required to adopt the most foolish and the most fatal notions, under the penalty of being denounced as all that is ignorant, and all that is perverse, and all that is unchristian, to be at peace with men who thus assail us, is impossible,—nay that in such a case, peace with those who are openly subverting the foundations of our faith, would be treason against truth;—an unprincipled abandonment of that faith for which we are required earnestly to contend. But in entering into such contention, which may often be a most sacred duty, we ought to consider, not merely whether we have sufficient ability, but, what is of equal importance, and perhaps of still rarer occurrence, whether we possess a sufficient command of temper for it. The man who cannot bear to have the provoking epithets which adorn the controvertist's vocabulary applied to him, without being tempted to adopt them,—who cannot unite mildness of disposition with active zeal for the truth, nor inflict wholesome castigation upon its most furious or its most petulant opposers, without losing his temper, ought to avoid all disputes. The disputant ought, with the greatest caution, to guard his zeal from being mingled with the unhallowed fire of human passion, remembering that “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Another duty that we owe to our King is, *to extend his kingdom*. That this is our duty hardly needs to be proved. We are commanded to exhibit in our conduct, the excellence of the principles of Chris-

tianity, in such a manner as to allure others to cultivate them,—to make “our light so to shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.” We are soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and as a soldier considers any expression of disrespect towards his king, as a personal insult to himself, and will maintain, at all hazards, the honour of the standard under which he fights ; even so will the Christian soldier be always ready to repress any insult that may be offered in his presence, to the Captain of his Salvation, and will maintain the transcendent excellences of the King whom he serves, and the glories of that kingdom which it is his duty and his delight to defend and to increase. As a good soldier, he will do every thing in his power to promote the designs of his leader : and if it be the end of God’s moral government to put an end to sin, and establish righteousness,—if the hosts of heaven be employed in promoting this end, he will consider it as the highest honour to be a fellow-worker, in however narrow a sphere, in furthering the same happy design. To rescue an immortal being from the dominion of sin, and make him a subject of the King of kings, he will consider as a nobler victory than any that the historian has recorded, or the poet sung. Well may the soldier of Jesus Christ leave to the great and the mighty, the wretched boast of having written their title to celebrity in the blood of their fellow creatures,—of having made the widow’s tear, and the orphan’s cry

the heralds of their fame,—of having exhibited the proofs of their prowess in cities overthrown and provinces laid waste. More soothing to him will be the reflection, that he has wielded, with courage and success, those weapons which though not carnal, “are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds,”—that he has been enabled to repel the assaults of the enemies of Christianity, to subdue them to the truth, and to cheer and to strengthen his feeble fellow soldiers,—that, united with angels as a messenger of mercy to men, he has been able to alleviate the load of human guilt and misery, and to increase the sum of human virtue and happiness. Victories that are obtained over ignorance and guilt may pass without notice in the world, or the notice which they attract may be of a very unenviable kind ; but they are recorded in an imperishable register ; they are a cause of joy in heaven, and will be remembered with honour when every earthly monument of power and splendour shall have mouldered in the dust, together with the hands that reared them. If ever enthusiasm be amiable or useful, then surely it is so when it regards the noblest object that ever awakened the desires, or called forth the exertions of any human being ; and the Christian may be permitted to indulge no ordinary degree of ardour, in the prosecution of a design, for the accomplishment of which the Son of God did not hesitate to die. If he whose heart exults amidst the spirit-stirring sights and sounds of war, whose courage is only up to a

higher pitch of intensity by scenes of carnage and by all the engines of death in active and fatal operation, who glories in the midst of danger, and rushes forward, with irresistible ardour, to snatch the wreath of victory, through the shouts of the warrior, and garments rolled in blood,—if *he* excite our admiration,—is the same ardour to be viewed with sentiments the very reverse of admiration,—to be stigmatized as the effect of a weak mind and a heated imagination, when it is felt in reference to an object of infinitely greater importance than any for which even kings contended or warriors bled? If Alexander wept at the tomb of Achilles, to think that he himself had no Homer to celebrate his deeds, and perpetuate his fame; is the Christian to be reproached if he feel,—or is he not rather to be consider as destitute of the Spirit of his Master if he do not feel,—an irresistible desire to achieve those victories which, if they find no place in the poet's song, will be celebrated throughout eternity, in the anthems of heaven? If, then, we regard either the authority or example of our heavenly King,—if we would wish, when our days are at an end, to say that they have not been spent in vain, and that we have not been useless members of his kingdom, nor careless of its prosperity,—if we would wish to be able to say, when we stand before his judgment seat, that as he was, so have we been in the world,—if we be ambitious for the honour that perisheth not, and for a crown that doth not fade,—if we wish to associate at last with the glorious men

who have instructed the Church by their wisdom, adorned it by their holiness, and cemented its foundations with their blood, then let us exert ourselves by example, by instruction, by every means in our power to promote the prosperity, and extend the limits of that kingdom into which we ourselves have, by the grace of God, been brought. For “they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”



## CHAPTER V.

### GENERAL REMARKS.

WE have thus traced Christ in the discharge of all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. For the discharge of the whole of them, his death, and consequently his Incarnation was essentially necessary. He discharged the duties resulting from these offices from the beginning. He discharged them all during his sojourn on earth. But we have seen that without dying, he could not fully have discharged the duties of any one of his offices. And at every step we have seen the absolute necessity of the total absence from him, of any thing to which the terms fallen and sinful could, in any sense, be applied. We have seen, upon the clearest and most indisputable evidence that had he been fallen and sinful, his death could have afforded us no more instruction, as to the character of God, than the death of any other man,—that it could have been no satisfaction to the divine justice for our sins,—and that it must have been the very reverse of a triumph over death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

It clearly appears that had he been fallen and sinful, neither could his life nor his death have revealed to us the perfections of God, in any other way, though perhaps in a somewhat higher degree, than the life and death of any other good but sinful man, who has by grace been made a partaker of the divine nature. Neither in his life nor in his death could he have taken our sicknesses, and borne our infirmities, or have offered up that resistless intercession, "Father, *I will*, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." Neither in his life nor in his death could he have manifested to all, the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, nor have made his victory the earnest and assurance of ours.

I have already had occasion to observe that in Christ these three offices were never separated; that he at all times possessed all the fulness of the power, and performed all the duties pertaining to them all. If there ever was a moment in which he was destitute of any one power belonging to any one of his offices, then at that moment he was destitute of all the powers belonging to them all; and was neither Prophet, Priest, nor King at all. This remark may at first sight appear to be a matter of little importance; it is however in reality one of the most important principles in theology, that Christ never could possess any one of the powers of any one of his offices, without possessing all the plenitude of the powers belonging to them all. To deny this, and to maintain, as is strenuously done by the new theology, that he

was first anointed as Prophet, next as Priest, and then as King, is, as I shall presently have occasion to shew, to deny that he is a *person* at all ; and to reduce him to the state of a mere attribute or influence. If Jesus Christ was at one time anointed a Prophet, at another time anointed a Priest, and at another a King, then he may be the personified power of God, or wisdom of God, but a distinct person in the Holy Trinity he is not, and cannot be. That he saved men from the beginning, and therefore from the beginning was possessed of all the powers and prerogatives of all his offices, I have repeatedly been called upon to notice. If he was capable of receiving any one of the powers, of any one of his offices, without at the same time receiving all the powers of them all, then, it may be, that he was a mere man, acting under a divine influence, but on this supposition, totally destitute of any divine personality ; and consequently, that the doctrine of the Trinity is very much what Socinians call it, will presently appear. A few remarks on the inseparable union of his different offices, will be previously proper.

As in the Trinity we ascribe to each particular person some particular part in the work of our salvation more especially and immediately, than to any of the other persons, yet would deem it impious to suppose that there is any one act of any of them, in which they do not all equally concur ; even so, while one portion of Christ's work is ascribed, and properly so to one of his offices, more especially and im-

mediately than to any other of his offices, yet would we deem it impious to suppose that Christ was ever divided, or that any one of these offices was ever separated from the others, or was ever exercised apart from, and exclusively of the others. When speaking of the two natures united in his person, we sometimes ascribe one thing more particularly to the one nature, and another thing to the other nature,—and often improperly enough,—yet would consider it inconsistent with piety to forget that there is but one Christ, to whose undivided person every characteristic, and every action is to be ascribed, whether more peculiarly appropriate to the one nature or to the other; even so, when speaking of his different offices, we ascribe, and properly ascribe one action, or one characteristic to one office more peculiarly than to another, yet ought we never to forget, that in his one person the three offices were inseparably united. Throughout his life these offices were inseparably combined, and were uniformly manifested together. For what is it that gives to his every prophetic act, by which he manifests the Father, a claim upon our reverential regard, far beyond aught that is due to the philosopher, the sage, or the modern theologian? Is it not this, that his every prophetic act combines with it all the sacredness of his sacerdotal character, and all the authority of his regal power; so that if we refuse to be taught by him, we cut ourselves off from all participation in his sacerdotal grace, and expose ourselves to be crushed

beneath the weight of that iron rod by which he will dash his enemies to pieces? Hence it is said, that "the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority." And when he performs any sacerdotal act, as when he said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," is not this also a prophetic act, manifesting the grace and the power of the Godhead? and is it not an efficacious act, simply because what, as a Priest, he has grace to promise, as a King he has power to bestow? And his every regal act is performed for the purpose of giving to his prophetic revelations, and to his sacerdotal grace, that power and efficacy which they could never otherwise possess. And the offices thus united in him through his whole life, were not separated at its close. His sufferings in the garden and on the cross, not only constituted a perfect satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, but found at the same time, by far the most impressive and instructive portion of his prophetic manifestation of the Divine character, and also the most victorious and triumphant exhibition of his regal power, when the serpent's head was bruised, and principalities and powers defeated and triumphed over. Hence while sacrifice, in general, presented a type of his dying for sin, on the great day of atonement two goats were provided, to give a more complete representation of his work on the cross. While one was sacrificed as an atonement, another carried away the sins of the people into a land not inhabited, where they might be



heard of no more. Even so, our Lord did not merely shed his blood for our sins, but he took them upon him, and carried them away into the land of forgetfulness, and buried them for ever.

It would require a much more lengthened detail than, I conceive, can be at all necessary on so plain a point, to enter into all the Scripture proof that might easily be produced, in order to prove that Christ was at all times truly and fully Prophet, Priest, and King ; and that the functions of all these offices were combined in every act. Two texts only I shall quote, "Being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."<sup>1</sup> Now he is not perfected as a Saviour, nor can be the author of salvation, through the perfection of any one of his official characters, but through the perfection of them all. And as we are informed, both in the preceding verse, and in a previous part of the same epistle, that he was "made perfect through sufferings," it follows, that in the depth of his sufferings, not one, but the whole of his official characteristics had their most perfect exhibition. It is also said, "By one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."<sup>2</sup> Now as he does not, and cannot perfect them that are sanctified, by the exercise of one, but by the exercise of all his offices, it follows, that in that one offering, by which they that are sanctified are made perfect, they were all combined.

There is between the different offices of Christ, a

<sup>1</sup> Heb. v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 14.

real and essential distinction ; but it is a distinction similar to that between justification and sanctification. These are perfectly distinct and different things ; but in their communication, and in their possession, they are never separated. Even so the offices of Christ are perfectly distinct, but in their exercise are never separated. No error can be more fatal than what I conceive to be by no means an unfrequent practical error,—to suppose that Christ may be divided, and that we may enjoy the blessings resulting from the exercise of one of his offices, while we have neither part nor lot in the other,—to suppose for example, that we may be pardoned by him as our Priest, while we are neither taught by him as our Prophet, nor saved from sin by him as a King. The theology which teaches that Christ was anointed to his different offices at different times, teaches very clearly at the same time, that this fatal error has a solid foundation in truth. But neither in the exercise of his offices on earth, nor in the application of the fruits of them to the believer on earth, can there be any separation, though there is a wide and palpable distinction. And in proof of this I may refer to the experience of the believer, an argument which, in this case, I hold to be perfectly legitimate. If this should happily be the character of my reader, he will be able to say that he never makes any thing like a separation between the persons of the Trinity ; never feels any emotion, nor cherishes any sentiment towards one of these persons, in which the others have no share. He has

perhaps been attending the public ministrations of God's word,—or has been joining in his solemn ordinances,—or has been devoting an hour to private meditation and prayer, and, like Nathanael under the fig-tree, has been holding communion with God where no eye, save that of God, was upon him ; and God has met him, and blessed him. He has found him whom he sought, and feels that his faith is strengthened, and his hopes enlivened, and his humility deepened, and his charity enlarged, and his soul enabled to exult in the joy of God's salvation. And when this does happen, he never doubts that it is by the influence of the Holy Ghost,—that it is the Spirit of promise sealing him to the day of redemption, and enriching him with a foretaste of his future inheritance. But are his gratitude and his praise specifically directed to the Holy Ghost ? No : but knowing that this is the Father cheering him with the manifestations of his love,—that this is the Son giving to the Spirit the things that are his, to shew to the believer, and enriching him by the communications of his grace, through the communion of the Holy Ghost, his gratitude and his praise ascend, without being more specifically directed to one person than to another, to the holy and undivided and indivisible Jehovah. Even so, when in the life and in the death of Christ, he has learned to know him “whom to know is life eternal ;” and when he has “washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb that was slain ;” and when,

looking to the Saviour's power, he can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me;"—and when he is thus enjoying the blessings resulting from all the offices of Christ, and rejoicing in him who is made of God unto him "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and feels that he is "complete in him who is the head of all principality and power," is it as his Prophet, as his Priest, or as his King, separately, that he rejoices in him? No: for it is not in the exercise of any one of the Redeemer's offices that his completeness stands, but in the exercise of them all; and in such an hour no such distinction is thought of, but he rejoices in him who is Prophet, Priest, and King in one,—in whom there is no division and no defect. He rejoices in him who is not *now* a Prophet, *then* a Priest, and at some *other* period either made, or to be made a King; but in him who is always Prophet, Priest, and King,—who is each in every act that he performed, and in every pang that he endured.

Take away then from Christ, at any one period, any one of these offices, and you at the same time effectually divest him of the others. They are so interwoven, that neither in the exercise of the duties resulting from them, were they ever separated in Christ, nor in the enjoyment of the fruits which they produce in believers, are they ever separated. If the different offices were assumed by the Mediator at very different times, then the man who, devoted to his sins, declares his reliance on the blood of Christ for



the full and free forgiveness of all his sins, while he shews that he neither is, nor desires to be separated from any one of them ; and the self-righteous man who tells us that being now instructed by Christ as his Prophet, and furnished with all necessary means of grace, he no longer feels any farther need of divine interference, but conceives that he can now justify and save himself, will each have it in his power to shew that his error is built upon a fundamental principle of the Gospel.

But these errors fatal as they are, are by no means the most fatal and deadly results, that spring from the doctrine that our Lord was anointed at various times to his various offices. I need not stop to shew how this notion as to our Lord's various anointings is connected with, and springs from the tenet that his humanity was fallen and sinful ; for the writers who maintain the latter tenet, openly avow and contend for the former, as indeed they must, for the one of necessity flows from the other. Let us look then at one or two more of the consequences to which these various anointings lead. We have just seen that they make a wide separation between the offices of Christ, and directly sanction the most ruinous practical errors. But they go much farther, and establish the Gnostic doctrine, which makes a separation between *Jesus* and *Christ*. The Docetæ, one class of Gnostics maintained that *Jesus* was a mere phantom, having the appearance of a man, but nothing more, and was assumed by *Christ* in order to render



himself visible. Other classes of Gnostics admitted that *Jesus* was a real man, but maintained that he was a mere man, and that *Christ* descended upon him at his baptism by John in Jordan. Christ was, according to them, one of the *Æous* who descending upon the man *Jesus*, filled him with, or rather through him exercised all wisdom and power ; and at his crucifixion left him and returned to the *Pleroma*. They openly maintained, therefore, that *Jesus* and *Christ* were two persons as different as possible.

Now admit that our Lord was no Prophet until his baptism, and no Priest until his resurrection, and no King until his resurrection, or his second advent,—for that appears to be a point not yet decided,—and the same separation between *Jesus* and *Christ* clearly and unavoidably follows. The *Christ*, or the *Messiah* is the official appellation of our Lord, who is so called on account of his being anointed as the Prophet, Priest, and King of the human race ;—anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost, which was not given by measure to him. Now, if he was never anointed till his baptism, it is too plain to need, or even to admit of proof, that *Jesus* lived thirty years before he was *Christ* at all. A more palpable separation between *Jesus* and *Christ* no Gnostic ever did make, or was ever capable of making. I need not waste time in proving to any one who has a Bible in his hand, how utterly repugnant this is, both to the spirit and to the very letter of Scripture, which speaks repeatedly and in express terms, of the birth

of *Christ*; a mode of speaking totally inconsistent with the tenet that he was born a fallen, sinful man, and was not *Christ* till he was anointed at his baptism.

This palpable separation between *Jesus* and *Christ*, which so directly and inevitably results from the fundamental tenets of the new Theology, cannot be evaded by saying, as the revivers of these tenets do say, and sincerely enough I am willing to admit, that they do believe that Jesus was, at his conception, anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost. For if he received all the fulness of the Holy Ghost at his conception, then he could not receive, at his baptism, more than all that fulness, that is, more than he possessed already: unless, indeed, it be maintained, that having received the fulness of the Holy Ghost at his conception, he had lost it before his baptism, and needed to have it restored. This notion, no doubt, is in perfect unison with the tenet, which is openly avowed, that he had different measures of the Holy Ghost at different times, but totally inconsistent, I apprehend, with the fact of his having been anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost in his conception. Besides, it is of no use whatever to say that we believe him to have been anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost in his conception, unless we can shew some purpose which was answered by that anointing. And on the principles of the new Theology, I cannot form the most distant idea of any one purpose that could be answered by that anointing. Many of the Ebionites, a Gnostic sect, believed in the

miraculous conception of Jesus. They nevertheless however, believed him to be a mere man, and that he became *Christ* only at his baptism. In this case the belief in the miraculous conception was a mere gratuitous article in their creed. It was of no use whatever in their Theology, and therefore gradually sank into oblivion among them, so that the greater part of them at least renounced it, and became mere Corinthians.<sup>1</sup> And the anointing of our Lord with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost, in his conception, is an equally gratuitous article in the creed of those who maintain that he was conceived and born, a fallen, sinful man. For besides that it stands in direct and irreconcilable contradiction to the doctrine that he was anointed with the Holy Ghost at his baptism, there is not one purpose that it can answer in their creed, and will therefore deliver their system from a grievous incumbrance if it be altogether dismissed.

It is equally useless to say, that the anointing with the Holy Ghost was necessary to constitute him man, —that by it a body was prepared for him. For if it was fallen sinful flesh that he took, the miraculous conception was totally unnecessary. And that the flesh which he took was fallen, and sinful, and that it continued to be so during the whole of his life on earth, is the grand fundamental tenet of the new theology. Now he could surely have taken fallen sinful flesh, without any extraordinary operation

<sup>1</sup> See note G. Appendix.

of the Holy Ghost ; for that would just have been the character of his flesh had he descended from Adam, like all other men, by ordinary generation. If the design of the Word was to be made such flesh as this, then the interposition of the Holy Ghost would have defeated the design ; for where he works all is perfect purity, and he would never have interposed his extraordinary agency to form flesh such as would, with unerring certainty have been produced without such interposition.

As little can it avail to say, that the miraculous conception was necessary to render him independent upon a Redeemer, as all other men are dependent upon him. For if he was fallen and sinful, then he was not independent upon a Redeemer ; but needed to be both redeemed, and regenerated. And in point of fact, we are expressly taught that he did redeem his own creature substance ; and that substance was just as much *himself*, as his divinity was himself. And we are moreover taught that he actually was regenerated,—nay that if he was more than a regenerated man, he can be no Saviour of ours. The miraculous conception then, which prevented him not from being born fallen and sinful, did not, and could not, exempt him from the necessity of being redeemed and regenerated ; and we are expressly taught that, in fact, he possessed no such exemption. The angel tells Mary that in consequence of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon her, and the overshadowing of the power of the Highest, the fruit of her womb



was generated a "holy thing," and consequently could neither need, nor be capable of regeneration. But the new theology teaches that he was generated a fallen, sinful thing; and both needed and received regeneration. We are assured that Jesus Christ was born the "Son of God," and therefore never could be "born again." But that which was born fallen and sinful, could not possibly be the Son of God without being "born again;" and even after the new birth could be the Son of God in no other sense than every regenerated man is his son. The theology, therefore, which teaches that our Lord received, or was capable of receiving, the Holy Ghost at his baptism, does effectually separate between *Jesus* and *Christ*.

But to revive the wretched follies of Gnosticism, which taught that difference between Jesus and Christ, which was merely a grosser and more aggravated form of that doctrine which, under the name of Nestorianism, at a later period rent the Church in pieces, is not the worst effect of the doctrine which teaches us, that our Lord was anointed, at his baptism, as our Prophet, and at his resurrection as our Priest. The Gnostics admitted the personality of Christ; but this doctrine effectually denies that he was a person at all, and reduces him to the rank of a mere attribute, or influence, shewing that he may be the personified power of God, or wisdom of God, but that a person he cannot be. For it is plain that a person could not be partially communicated to Jesus, but if communicated at all, must be completely, and totally



communicated. Of this, the Gnostics were very well aware ; and therefore, acknowledging the personality of Christ, they never dreamed of teaching that he was partly communicated to Jesus at one time, and partly at another ; but considered him as at once taking up his abode, in all his fulness, in the man Jesus. But if he was a mere attribute or influence, then he might be communicated in all possible variety of degrees,—might be given in such measure as to endue him, *now* with Prophetic, *then* with Sacerdotal, and *finally* with Kingly powers. And if our Lord was so anointed as to receive gradually, and at different times, the different powers belonging to his offices, then are we compelled to conclude that the man Christ Jesus, was not the very Word made flesh,—the very soul and body of the Incarnate Word, but merely a man actuated, and operated upon by a divine influence, beyond the usual lot of the children of men ; but at the same time as truly, and as certainly a mere man, as we are. Let the various anointings of our Lord to his various offices be admitted, and then that “ all the fulness of the God-head dwelt in him bodily,” is so far from being a glorious truth,—a truth upon which the reality of atonement, and the truth of every Christian doctrine depends, that it is a very easily demonstrable falsehood. A divine influence he possessed in a high degree ; of any divine personality he was as destitute as we are. Yet a doctrine so pregnant with utter ruin to every Christian principle, and to every Chris-

tian hope, is inculcated by men who do not at all disguise how much they feel themselves entitled to “despise others ;” and who, while they outrival the Gnostics in the irrationality of their tenets, outrival them also in their loud pretensions to superior illumination.

In proof of the utterly anti-christian nature of any system of theology, we need no better evidence than the fact, that it teaches us that Christ was anointed at his baptism, which is Gnosticism ; and especially when that fact is given in the aggravated form which teaches us, that at his baptism he was anointed to only one of his offices, expecting, at a future period, the unction which was to invest him with the powers belonging to the others. That this tenet is totally subversive of Christianity, we have still better evidence than that resulting from the preceding discussion,—a discussion however which must be considered as decisive, because it consists not of any complicated process of reasoning, so much as of a statement of palpable and undeniable facts. We have the direct testimony of holy Scripture. Gnosticism was coeval with, and indeed, among the Gentiles in general, somewhat prior to, the preaching of the Gospel. The apostle John lived to see that wretched system producing the most disastrous and fatal results. He was inspired by the Holy Ghost to take up his pen in opposition to it. Besides the abundant and conclusive internal evidence of this fact, furnished by his first epistle itself, we have the express testimony of Irenæus,

who learned it from Polycarp, the immediate disciple of John, and ordained by that apostle, bishop of Smyrna. To quote the whole of the testimony afforded by that epistle against the supposition that Christ was anointed at his baptism, would be nearly to copy the whole epistle. A few verses it will be proper to give:—"Who is a liar, but he that denieth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*? He is anti-Christ that denieth the Father, and the Son."<sup>1</sup> "Whosoever will confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."<sup>2</sup> "Whosoever believeth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."<sup>3</sup> In these passages the apostle teaches very distinctly, *first*, that *Jesus* is the Son of God as well as *Christ*, whom they allowed to be the Son of God, in a certain sense, and therefore that *Jesus* could not be either a mere phantom, as some classes of the Gnostics taught, nor a mere man, as others of them maintained, nor, I may fairly, and *a fortiori* add, a fallen sinful man, as is taught by those who have revived Gnosticism in more than all its original irrationality. He teaches also that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, these not being the names of two different individuals, but of one and the same,—and consequently that the Gnostics in maintaining that *Jesus* was not the *Christ* before his baptism, were maintaining a doctrine directly anti-Christian. To say then that *Jesus* was anointed at his baptism,—that he then was con-

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 22.<sup>2</sup> Ibid. iv. 15.<sup>3</sup> Ibid. v. 1.

stituted the Christ, as if he had not been always so, is the very thing that the apostle condemns, and condemns in terms of no measured reprobation. And we cannot doubt that his reprobation would have been still more emphatic and more severe, had he heard the doctrine, not only that Christ was anointed at his baptism, but that he was then only partially anointed, anointed only as our Prophet; and that from time to time, he continued to receive fresh accessions to his Christhood, just as if it had ever been possible for him to be the Christ at all, without being fully and completely so; or as if the Divinity in him was no person, but, as it is in us, an influence which may be poured out upon us more or less abundantly at different times. If he condemns with such merited severity the separation of *Jesus* from *Christ*, he would unquestionably have condemned, with a still more pointed severity, the still more fatal and impious doctrine which separates Christ from himself, and teaches that he was more the Christ at one period, than he was at another,—a doctrine obviously and irreconcilably opposed to any idea of his Divine personality.

There is another passage in the same epistle which it would be doing great injustice to my subject to omit. It is this,—“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”<sup>1</sup> It gives me

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 6.

great pleasure to be able to establish my own view of the apostle's doctrine, and also to present to the reader by far the best commentary on the verse just quoted that I have ever met with ; a commentary too which, in the present instance, will not be suspected of being got up for the occasion. I take it from one of the ablest works with which the present age has enriched the theological literature of England, and I persuade myself no reader will think the extract a line too long.

‘ The fifth chapter begins with these words,  
‘ “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is  
‘ born of God.” It will perhaps be allowed, that to  
‘ be “ born of God ” means *to be a Christian*, to have  
‘ that faith which Christ requires when he admits a  
‘ person into his covenant. St. John therefore here  
‘ says, “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ,”  
‘ has the true faith of a Christian ; from which it  
‘ follows, that whosoever does not believe that Jesus is  
‘ the Christ, has not the true faith of a Christian.  
‘ Now this was precisely the point which all the  
‘ Gnostics, whether Corinthians or Docetæ, refused to  
‘ believe. They would not say that Jesus is the Christ,  
‘ at least they would not say that he was the Christ at  
‘ his birth, or before his baptism. They held that  
‘ *Jesus* was one person, and *Christ* another. The two  
‘ were united for a time, when Christ had descended  
‘ upon Jesus at his baptism : but they had existed  
‘ separately before his baptism, and they were again  
‘ separated before his crucifixion. It was with good



‘ reason therefore that St. John made this point the  
‘ test of a Christian’s belief: it was necessary for him  
‘ to say explicitly that Jesus is the Christ: and St.  
‘ John is only proposing a similar test, when he says  
‘ in the fifth verse, “ Who is he that overcometh the  
‘ world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of  
‘ God ? ” In the fourth verse he had explained what  
‘ he meant by *overcoming the world*. “ This is the  
‘ victory,” he says, “ that overcometh the world, even  
‘ our faith.” So that *to overcome the world*, and *to be*  
‘ *born of God*, are used by St. John for the same thing,  
‘ for the true belief which it is necessary for a Christian  
‘ to hold. He tells us therefore that the true Christian  
‘ must believe that *Jesus is the Christ*, and that *Jesus is*  
‘ *the Son of God*. The Gnostic would have said that  
‘ Christ was united to Jesus at his baptism ; or he  
‘ would have said, attaching his own meaning to the  
‘ words, that Christ was the Son of God : but St. John  
‘ rejected these imperfect and evasive confessions, and  
‘ required the true Christian to say unequivocally, that  
‘ *Jesus is the Christ*, and that *Jesus is the Son of God*.  
‘ He then continues, “ This is he that came by water  
‘ and blood, even Jesus Christ : not by water only, but  
‘ by water and blood : and it is the Spirit that beareth  
‘ witness, because the Spirit is truth.” The Gnostics  
‘ no doubt had heard in the preaching of the apostles,  
‘ and by this time they had seen it in the written  
‘ Gospels, that when Jesus rose out of the water, the  
‘ Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and a voice  
‘ was heard, which said, “ This is my beloved Son.”

‘ This was the foundation upon which the Gnostics  
‘ built their doctrine concerning Christ. They held  
‘ that the Spirit, which descended like a dove, was one  
‘ of the Æous called Christ : that Jesus went into the  
‘ water, either a delusive phantom, or a mere human  
‘ being ; but that when he came out of the water,  
‘ Christ was residing in him. St. John denies this in  
‘ the verse which I have read : “ This is he,” he says,  
‘ “ that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ : ”  
‘ not Jesus only, nor Christ only, but Jesus Christ :  
‘ not two separated beings united for a time, but one  
‘ person. Nor did this one person Jesus Christ come  
‘ *by water only*, or *in* the water only when he was  
‘ baptized : but he had been come long before *by blood*,  
‘ when he was first made flesh and dwelt among us.  
‘ And as to the Spirit which descended like a dove,  
‘ and which was said by the Gnostics to be the Æon  
‘ Christ, then for the first time coming down from  
‘ heaven, St. John goes on to say, “ It is the Spirit  
‘ that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth ; ”  
‘ or in other words, The Spirit was not Christ, as the  
‘ Gnostics say, but it came to bear witness of Christ,  
‘ to testify that Jesus, on whom the Spirit descended,  
‘ was the Son of God : and this witness was given by  
‘ God himself, when he said, “ This is my beloved  
‘ Son, in whom I am well pleased.” If any of the  
‘ Gnostic writings had come down to us, we should  
‘ perhaps find that it was a common expression in  
‘ them to say that Christ came *by water*, or *in the*  
‘ *water*. It at least seems plain, that some persons

‘ must have said so, or St. John would not have  
 ‘ thought it necessary to assert, that he did not come  
 ‘ *by water only*. But ecclesiastical history acquaints us  
 ‘ with no persons who would have said that *Christ came*  
 ‘ *by water only*, except the Gnostics : and they, whether  
 ‘ Corinthians or Docetæ, would certainly have said so,  
 ‘ since this was their fundamental doctrine concerning  
 ‘ the descent of Christ. I would observe also, that  
 ‘ though our translators in each place wrote “ *by*  
 ‘ *water*,” the expressions are not the same in the  
 ‘ Greek ; and the literal translation would be “ This  
 ‘ is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ,  
 ‘ not in the water only, but in the water and the blood,”  
 ‘ *οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ αἵματι*, which last  
 ‘ clause might perhaps be rendered, “ but in the water  
 ‘ and by blood ;” and the meaning of the whole  
 ‘ passage would be, that Christ did not come when the  
 ‘ Spirit descended upon Jesus in the water, but Christ  
 ‘ was with Jesus—*more accurately, Christ was Jesus—*  
 ‘ both when he was in the water, and before, when he  
 ‘ was born into the world.<sup>1</sup>

‘ It may be said, perhaps, that the phrase *coming*  
 ‘ *by blood* is a very extraordinary one, to express *being*  
 ‘ *born into the world* : to which I would answer, that  
 ‘ the fairest and safest way to interpret an author is by  
 ‘ his own expressions ; and when St. John in his Gos-  
 ‘ pel wished to speak of the spiritual birth of a rege-  
 ‘ nerated Christian, in opposition to his first or natural

<sup>1</sup> In the first clause of verse 6, it is *δι’ ὕδατος*, in the second *ἐν τῷ ὕδατι*, and John the Baptist speaks of himself as baptizing *ἐν ὕδατι*, John i. 33. In John iii. 5, we have *γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος*.

‘ birth, he writes, “ Which were born, not of blood,  
 ‘ nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,  
 ‘ but of God.” (i. 13.) It is plain, that *to be born*  
 ‘ *of blood* is used in this place by St. John for a natural  
 ‘ or ordinary birth : and so I conceive, that when he  
 ‘ spoke in his Epistle of Jesus Christ *coming by blood*,  
 ‘ he meant to assert, contrary to the Gnostics, that  
 ‘ Christ as well as Jesus was born of Mary, or, as it  
 ‘ is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *he was partaker*  
 ‘ *of flesh and blood*, (ii. 14.) I have perhaps spent  
 ‘ too much time upon what may seem to some a matter  
 ‘ of verbal criticism : but I could not pass over what  
 ‘ appears to me so plain an allusion to the Corinthian  
 ‘ heresy without discussing it at some length. I am  
 ‘ aware that this is not the usual interpretation, and I  
 ‘ offer it with the greatest diffidence : <sup>1</sup> but when the  
 ‘ whole Epistle is so pointedly directed against the  
 ‘ Docetæ, and when this view of the passage enables  
 ‘ us to explain it literally without any allegorical or  
 ‘ mystical meaning, I can hardly help concluding that  
 ‘ the interpretation is right, and that the false doctrines  
 ‘ of the Gnostics concerning Christ were those which  
 ‘ St. John intended to confute.’ <sup>2</sup>

After all this it will surely not be pretended that the Theology which teaches the various anointings

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis understood this passage to be directed against the Corinthian notion of Christ descending upon Jesus at his baptism : but he explains *coming by blood* to relate to the sufferings and death of Christ. Vol. iii. part i. c. 7. § 3. p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> Bampton Lecture for 1829, page 187. Preached by Dr. Burton, Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church.

of the Lord's Christ, and the various generations, and the regeneration of the Son of God, is a piece of mere harmless absurdity. They who can pour the most ineffable contempt upon the attainments of all living divines, and profess to unfold for our instruction all that is profound in Christian Theology, while giving, at every step the most glaring proofs of their total destitution of the most ordinary information, and pushing Gnosticism to an extent more wildly extravagant, and more directly fatal than it ever received either from Simon Magus its first propagator, or from Valentinus its last improver, may perhaps be considered only as objects of pity. They might well enough be left to proclaim themselves by far the greatest divines that the world possesses, without notice; but when they proceed to overturn every doctrine of Christianity, their crude speculations require to be met with the most uncompromising hostility; for it is no trifle that is at stake. They who talk of the various anointings of Christ, manifest an ignorance which fully acquits them of any evil intention. They know not that what they give us as the most profound Theology, is in reality the most extravagant Gnosticism; as is well known to every tyro in Ecclesiastical History. But the goodness of their intentions is very far from diminishing the mischief of the efforts by which they mislead others, as ignorant as themselves, into the most antichristian errors,—errors, whose revival in the nineteenth century certainly no man could have



dreaded. “The Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” He bore witness at our Lord’s baptism ; he bore witness during the whole period of his public ministry ; he bore witness at his outpouring upon the Apostles on the day of pentecost ; he bore witness by the signs and wonders and mighty works by which he enabled them to confirm their doctrines ; he beareth witness still, taking of the things that are Christ’s, and shewing them to us. But if all of these manifestations of Christ, or if any of them, be considered as the anointing of Christ ; and still more if we are to suppose him to have been anointed at various times, receiving even new accessions to his Christhood, then we must admit that both the ancient Gnostic and the modern Socinian attribute to him a character somewhat too high. We must consider him not merely with the former, as a different person from Jesus, and in some sense the Son of God ; but with the latter, as acting, it may be, under the impulse of a divine influence, but destitute of any divine personality,—as fallible and peccable,—nay, as actually fallen and sinful. If either of these doctrines be true, then the Gospel certainly cannot be called “ a cunningly-devised fable,” for it must be described as the most blundering imposture that ever bewildered the common sense of mankind. Of such a doctrine how well may we say, in the strong language employed on a different occasion by Saurin, if it be true, “ then were the Apostles idiots ; the early opponents of the Gospel

were idiots ; and the primitive Christians were idiots.” And of such writers how justly may it be said, that they are kept from enuntiating the ancient heresies by the dogmatism of ignorance ; while in principle, all the ancient heresies,—and that pushed to an extent beyond what ancient heretics dreamed of,—are involved in what they write.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SCRIPTURE TESTIMONIES.

IF any thing be capable of proof from Scripture, I think it must be admitted that the view now given of the person and work of Christ affords the most abundant, decisive, and overwhelming proof that his humanity was the very reverse of fallen, sinful humanity. A conclusion which rests upon general principles, is always more satisfactory than one that is founded on particular texts. In the present age, when the most loose and vague and unsatisfactory views of Inspiration are commonly avowed, the authority of any particular text is very unceremoniously set aside. But in the general view which has been taken of the work which Christ came to do in the flesh, we have seen, at every step in our progress, that to introduce the tenet that his flesh was fallen and sinful, is totally to destroy the nature of that work, and to render it incapable of teaching any one of the lessons that we have been accustomed to draw from it. Angels and men have learned the character of God, from the manifestation of it in the person

and work of Christ. But if he was a fallen, sinful man, then the whole Christian world has hitherto been labouring under the strangest misconception as to the nature of that work,—have never had the most distant conception of what Christianity is, but, instead of it, have been believing something not only totally different from, but essentially opposed to it. For he who believes that the humanity of Christ was fallen and sinful, and he who holds a view of Christianity, every principle of which that tenet overturns, are so opposed, that one of them must be fundamentally and fatally wrong. And as the Church never did believe, as I shall soon have occasion to shew, that the humanity of Christ was fallen and sinful, it follows that if that tenet be right, then the Church has from the beginning been training her members to the belief of something which not only is not Christianity, but which stands in fundamental and fatal opposition to Christianity. I would ask the reader who has accompanied me through the preceding pages, whether he has found the view that I have given of the work which Christ came to do in the flesh, something altogether new and strange, something totally unlike aught that he ever heard before, and utterly subversive of all his previous views of the Gospel? Particular mistakes, and incidental errors there may be ; but is the whole frame work of that branch of Theology which I have been treating, in irreconcilable opposition to all that he has hitherto been taught upon the subject, and to all that he has understood

to be the doctrine of the Church. I apprehend he will say that the very reverse of all this is the truth, and that in the preceding pages he has met with nothing but the common current Theology to which he has always been accustomed,—has met with nothing either to startle him by its novelty, or to overthrow the doctrines which he has always been taught to consider as sound and orthodox. But either I must have written, or he must have read very carelessly, if he has not seen at every step how completely the doctrines which I have advocated, are subverted by the introduction of the tenet that the flesh of Christ was fallen, sinful flesh. He must have seen how effectually that tenet sweeps away every principle upon which I have reasoned, and every conclusion to which I have come. Christ came that he might reveal to us the Father,—might manifest to us, and to the whole rational creation, the infinite perfections of the incomprehensible Jehovah; but if he was a fallen, sinful man, that manifestation has not yet been made, the vindication of his perfections from the suspicion cast upon them by the introduction of sin, has not yet been accomplished, and to our altars the inscription is still appropriate—“To the unknown God.” He came that he might lay down his life for his sheep, and wash us from our sins in his own blood; but if he was a fallen, sinful man, he had no life that he had any power to lay down, nor if he had, would such a “common thing” as the blood of a fallen man have availed as an atonement



for our sins. And when the only source whence our knowledge of God is drawn, has been dried up ; and the only ground upon which our hope of being reconciled to him is swept away, I know not what of Christianity remains that is worth defending, or that is capable of defence.

A few of the many texts bearing upon the Incarnation, and which have not already been particularly discussed, may with propriety be noticed in this place. The expectations that were entertained from the beginning, concerning the promised Deliverer, it would be long to trace, and not here very neccessary. Eve expected not a fallen man when, on the birth of her first-born son, hoping that the promised deliverer was sent, she called his name Cain, and said, " I have gotten a man from the Lord." Moses seems to have had the same suffering conqueror in his eye when, feeling that though " he was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, and mighty both in word and in deed," he was yet all unfit for a work which seemed too hard to be accomplished by fallen man, he said, " O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." <sup>1</sup> It may I think be supposed, without any straining of the text, that by " him whom thou wilt send," Moses referred to the Shiloh whose coming Jacob had foretold, and to whom the gathering of the people was to be. A very slight investigation would furnish us with many indications that the ancient believers in the victory of the

<sup>1</sup> Exodus iv. 13.

“woman’s seed,” had no idea that he who was to deliver them from the contagion of the fall, was himself to be a fallen sinful man.

The first text to which I shall refer is Psalm xlv. 7, “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” That this should be read “O God, thy God hath anointed thee,” I entertain no doubt;<sup>1</sup> and thus we have the humanity of Christ, that which was anointed, distinctly called God. But the purpose for which I principally quote the text is to introduce the opinion of *Augustine* with regard to the time when the anointing took place. “Neither truly was Christ anointed with the Holy Spirit, then when it descended upon him as a dove, at his baptism: for then he condescended to bear the figure of his body, that is, his Church, in which they that are baptized receive the Holy Spirit. But he must be understood to have been anointed with that mystic and invisible unction, then when the Word of God was made flesh, that is, when the human nature, without any preceding merit of good work, was united to God the Word in the Virgin’s womb, so as to become one person with him. For this reason we confess him to be born of the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary. For it is most absurd to suppose that when he was thirty years old,—for at that age he was baptized by John—he received the

<sup>1</sup> See Schleusner’s Lexicon of the Old Testament Greek, under the word *θεος*.

Holy Spirit ; but that he came to baptism, as altogether without sin, so not without the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> *Augustine* understood theology too well to admit the fatal supposition that Christ was, at his baptism, anointed as a Prophet, or as any thing else. The Fathers assign various reasons for the baptism of our Lord. Some teach us that he was baptized that he might set us an example, for if his sinless flesh was baptized, how much more ought we to be so ;—some that he was baptized in order to give authority to the baptism of John,—some that his pure body might sanctify the waters of Jordan,—and communicate to them the power of washing sin away. But not one of them ever hints that he was baptized because being made fallen sinful flesh, he needed that regeneration of which baptism is the outward sign, as well as we : and they were too much harassed by the inroads of the Gnostics, for a moment to admit that at his baptism he received his unction.

I next refer to the celebrated declaration “ Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall

<sup>1</sup> Nec sane tunc unctus est Christus Spiritu Sancto, quando super eum baptizatum velut columba descendit : tunc enim corpus suum, id est, Ecclesiam suam præfigurare dignatus est, in qua præcipue baptizati accipiunt Spiritum Sanctum : sedista mystica et invisibili unctione tunc intelligendus est unctus, quando Verbum Dei caro factum est, id est, quando humana natura sine ullis præcedentibus bonorum operum meritis Deo Verbo est in utero Virginis copulata, ita ut cum illo una fieret persona. Ob hoc eum confitemur natum de Spiritu Sancto et Virgine Maria. Absurdissimum est enim, ut credamus eum cum jam triginta esset annorum, (ejus enim ætatis a Joanne baptizatus est) accipisse Spiritum Sanctum : sed venisse illum ad baptisma, sicut sine ullo omnino peccato, ita non sine Spiritu Sancto. *De Trinitate, Lib. 15. Cap. 46.*

call his name Immanuel.”<sup>1</sup> As the principle of this text has been already sufficiently discussed, I do not quote it with the intention of making any comment upon it; but simply for the purpose of repeating a remark already made, that if our Lord took fallen sinful flesh, no imaginable reason can be assigned for the extraordinary circumstances that attended his birth. If his flesh differed not from ours in any thing,—if he, like us, was fallen and sinful, then why was his flesh generated in a manner so extremely different? And upon what ground can we suppose that God wrought a miracle, which does indeed surpass all miracles, for the purpose of producing that which would, with unerring certainty, have been produced without it? And upon what principle can we account for God interposing, not merely to produce that which would have been produced by the ordinary course of nature, but to produce a fallen sinful thing, which he denominates a “holy thing,” and which, being generated by his immediate act, is called “the Son of God”?

The next text to which I refer is—“The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.”<sup>2</sup> A dangerous notion has sometimes been drawn from this verse, or at least this verse has been quoted in support of it. The notion to which I refer is, that the flesh of Christ

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah vii. 14. Compare Matth. i. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxxi. 22. Literally—The Lord createth a new thing in the earth, a woman shall encompass a strong one.

was a new thing created *in* the Virgin, but not created *of* her. The necessity of believing that he received from her all that every other man receives from a mother, I have already pointed out, and need not here repeat. But it is surely as foolish to say, that because the phrase, “to create a new thing” is used<sup>1</sup> where there is no actual creation, therefore we cannot infer from this text that Christ was a new creature. If we mean to be extremely precise in our language, we would not perhaps say that Christ was a new *creation*, because his humanity was produced by generation; but we can have no hesitation whatever in declaring him to be a new *creature*. Yet the Fathers had no scruples about the word *creation*, as applied to Christ, being familiar with the text, “The Lord created me the beginning of his ways, for his works,”<sup>2</sup> a text which, being greatly relied upon by the Arians, they were very much in the habit of discussing, in order to shew how an orthodox meaning could be drawn from it. And in truth any scrupulosity upon the subject is more than is either required or authorized, by either reason or Scripture; for the Scriptures speaking of the believer sometimes describe him as a “new creature,” and sometimes as regenerated; and our Lord himself is expressly called “the beginning of the creation of God.”

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xvi. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Κυριος εκλισε με αρχην ὁδων αυτου εις εργα αυτου. This is the Septuagint translation of Proverbs viii. 22; and as very few of the Fathers knew Hebrew, they were not aware of its being a very gross mistranslation.



In connection with this text we may properly advert to two others, The first is—"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> The following exhortation may, I think, be considered as perfectly equivalent to this, at least I see not the difference between them—"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."<sup>2</sup> On the authority of such texts as these, it appears to me that the Fathers were perfectly justified in calling our Lord "the new Man" even if it should be urged that the "old Man," whom we are required to "put off," and the "new Man" whom we are required to "put on,"<sup>3</sup> refer not at all to Adam and Christ, but are solely descriptive of our own character before and after regeneration. For "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Now if by putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, we become new creatures, then it is indisputable that he who was formed in the womb that "holy thing" by conformity to which we become new creatures, was himself a new creature. As far as the Covenants of God are concerned, there are only two men in existence, Adam and Christ, the first Adam and the last Adam,—the first man and the second man. Every individual is in either the one or the other of these men. If we be in the first Adam, we derive from him, as a fallen, sinful being, the inheritance of guilt and death. We must therefore of necessity be separated from him, and engrafted in the last Adam, that in him we may

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 14.<sup>2</sup> Ephes. iv. 24.<sup>3</sup> Col. iii. 9.

inherit righteousness and life eternal. But if he too was fallen and sinful, then our ingrafting into him can never make us new creatures, nor can any imaginable advantage be derived from our being transferred from one fallen stock to another. We may therefore with perfect safety and propriety call Christ a new creature, in whom we become new creatures. The only error against which we have to guard, in the use of such language, is the supposition that he was not formed truly and really “of the substance of his mother,” an error of the most fatal nature. But while we guard against this error, let us not forget that “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;” to little advantage doubtless if they be the flesh and bones of a fallen sinful man like ourselves.

We may now pass on to the text, “The word was made flesh.”<sup>1</sup> I have already shewn that it was essentially necessary for our Saviour to become man, as he could not otherwise have discharged the duties of any of his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. Without being truly God and truly man, he would have been totally unfit for the duties of any one of these offices. But upon the necessity of his Incarnation I need not again enter. The verse however suggests some other remarks which must not be passed over. It expresses the perfect identity of the Word and the flesh. It is not said that he assumed the flesh, or dwelt in the flesh, but that he was made

<sup>1</sup> John i. 14.

flesh ; *Non in homine, sed homo erat*, He was not in the man, but was the man. The union between the divinity and humanity took place at the moment of his conception in the Virgin's womb. It would utterly subvert all our views of Christ to suppose that his manhood was first formed, and the divinity then united to it ;<sup>1</sup> for this would just be to admit the possibility of a separation between the persons ; and it would be to admit that Jesus was at one time not the Christ : and in this case whether he was anointed at his baptism as the Gnostics said ; or was partially anointed then, as a Prophet, and at his resurrection as a Priest ; or whether he was ever anointed at all, is a matter into which it is of no consequence to us to inquire. Hence the Evangelist, who knew well the errors that were afloat upon the subject, does not even say that he assumed manhood, but that he was *made flesh*, his flesh from the moment of conception being as really and truly *himself*, as his divinity was *himself*. ' For the one Christ was both always the Son of God by nature, and the Son of Man, who was assumed, by grace, in time : Nor was he so assumed that being first created, he might be afterwards assumed, but so that he might be created in the act of assumption.'<sup>1</sup> The word ' assume ' does

<sup>1</sup> See note H. Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Ipse namque unus Christus et Dei Filius semper natura, et hominis filius qui extempore assumptus est gratia : nec sic assumptus est ut prius creatus post assumeretur, sed ut ipsa assumptione crearetur. *Augustine contra Sermonem Arrianorum*, cap. 8. This expression has been given with more point by a more modern writer—Eam sumendo creavit, et creando sumpsit. *Zanchius de Incarnatione*, p. 57.

by no means express all the reality and extent of that union which subsists between the two natures in Christ, and which is expressed by the Evangelist when he said “ The Word *was made* flesh.” It has indeed got a seat in our Theology from which any attempt to dislodge it would be useless : but I cannot help suspecting that both in ancient and modern times, it has had its share in misleading those who divide the one indivisible Christ. For that which was assumed, might possibly exist, nay we naturally suppose must exist, previous to its assumption. And with regard to the human *nature* which the Word assumed, this was no doubt the case. But when the idea is applied to that flesh which was the very flesh of the Word of God, it may lead to the supposition that that flesh existed as a person, before it became the flesh of the Word,—in other words, that Jesus existed before he was the Christ. Now the rule observed by the sacred writers is, that all the names, titles, attributes, which are applied to the one person of Christ, are equally applicable to either of his natures ; and that every thing that may be said of either of the natures, may also be said of the whole indivisible Christ. Thus the Son of Man is in heaven, while talking with Nicodemus on earth ; and God purchased the Church with his own blood, and the Lord of glory was crucified. To this rule I know not that any exception is to be found in Scripture.

As to the manner in which he became man, after

the heresies by which the primitive church was infested, had caused the assembling of repeated councils to condemn them, and had rendered necessary a more guarded mode of expression than had been called for at an earlier period, it was expressed by four Greek words, and the Word was said to have become man, *αληθως, τελεως, αδιαιρετως, ασυγχυτως*, that is, truly, perfectly, indivisibly, unconfusedly. The Docetæ taught that he was not really man, but that his humanity was a mere phantom. It was therefore made a necessary part of the orthodox creed, to confess that he was *truly* man, and not merely a phantom. The Apollinarians taught that he took only the body, but not the reasonable soul of man. It was therefore made a necessary part of the orthodox creed, to confess that he became *perfectly* man, and not man merely as to his body. Nestorius taught that in becoming man, there was still such a difference between what was divine and what was human in him, as to assign to him not only two natures, but two persons. It was therefore made a necessary part of the orthodox creed, to confess that in him there was no division, but that in his two natures, he was only *one* person. Eutyches taught that in becoming man, the divine and human natures were so mingled together, as to become but one nature distinct from either,—something lower than the divine and higher than the human. It was therefore made a necessary part of the orthodox creed to confess that in him the natures were never mingled nor confounded together,



and that in his one person there were still *two* distinct natures. Thus as the soul and the body, though very different in their nature, make but one man, without division or confusion, and are both necessary to the complete existence of the man, so the two natures in our Lord make but one Christ, who as he was God over all, even so was he man, *truly, perfectly*, without *division* of the persons, and without *confusion* of the natures.

Of the two former of these errors I am not aware that we are at present in any particular danger, though the whole church has been loudly proclaimed to be deeply and extensively affected with one, or both of them. The third, that in Christ there were two natures, is at present preached with a zeal that would do honour to a better cause. They who promulgate it do, no doubt, deny, as strongly as ever Nestorius did, that they are guilty of this heresy; while they are in reality pushing it to an extent to which Nestorius had little suspicion that it could be ever carried. To maintain that when the Word was made flesh, he was made fallen sinful flesh, is to leave that heresiarch far behind in the attempt to subvert the catholic faith. A more convenient opportunity however of shewing this, will occur afterwards. At present I shall only observe, that though it may very well be believed that God can operate upon a fallen sinful man, by his divine influence, nay, that he could dwell in such a man, without contracting any impurity; yet nothing strikes

me as being more repugnant to every sentiment of reverence and of piety, than to say that God was actually made a fallen sinful man,—that of God it may be said, that he was fallen and sinful. And that this is maintained, or at least has very lately been maintained, aye, and maintained as the basis of all sound theology, may be denied till earth ring again with the negation ; but, as long as we have eyes to read what is written, admits of neither doubt nor dispute. That they who have promulgated this fearful impiety, did so in utter ignorance of the nature of what they were propagating, and in reality meant no harm, may be readily granted ; and I should trust it may be reasonably hoped, that they who deny that they ever taught it, will at least, now that they are better instructed, teach it no more.

The two natures united in Christ at the moment when his humanity was first formed, were not separated at his death. That they were so, we are now distinctly taught. The ruinous consequences of this I have already pointed out, and shewn distinctly how that separation effectually destroys the doctrine of atonement and of the resurrection. “ For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” It was on the cross that he met the severest assaults of that enemy of mankind ; and it was on the cross that he obtained the most signal victory,—the last decisive triumph over him, “ destroying death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” But

if the divine nature was separated from him then, then it was not Christ who died, who was buried, and who rose again ; and consequently every hope that we repose on him is vain. And as neither the soul nor the body of Christ, while separated from each other, were separated from his divinity, so the resurrection did not separate them from it. United to divinity when separated from each other, they were not separated from it when united to each other. Nor did his ascension produce that separation. When he ascended up on high, he no more ceased to be truly man, than he ceased to be truly God when he descended. Nor have we any intimation that at any subsequent period, his human nature was separated from his divine nature. On the contrary we have the most decisive evidence that no such separation ever has taken, or ever will take place,—that the humanity of Christ now is just as truly human nature as ours is. A doctrine so plain and so certain, I need not stop to support by any formal proof to any reader of the Bible ; nor would it indeed have been necessary even to state it at all, were it not that it has not only been denied, but held up to scorn by some of the more hopelessly ignorant propagators of the doctrine that our Lord's humanity was fallen and sinful. Of that doctrine the denial that our Lord's humanity now exists is the natural result. Of the principal arguments that have been used in support of that doctrine it is the necessary and unavoidable result. We need not a more decisive proof

that these arguments are founded upon false principles, than the fact that they necessarily involve the ruinous supposition that our great Advocate is no longer man. If it be true that he could not be man, without being fallen and sinful ; then it is equally true that either he is fallen and sinful still, or he is man no more.

It is necessary to observe here that in the present age it would be proper to add a fifth to the four Greek words mentioned above ; or rather to give an additional application to the second of them—*θελεις*. That word was used, as I have said, to express the perfection of his manhood, in opposition to those who maintained that he took only a human body, but not a reasonable soul. It may now be also applied to express the perfection of his Godhead, in opposition to those who maintain that when he was made man he emptied himself of his divinity, and that he brought with him a Godhead person but no Godhead properties. Who was made man ? The Word. And what are the Godhead properties of the Word ? Infinity, eternity, and immutability in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. And what is the Word when divested of these properties ? He is clearly God no longer ; and it is equally clear that he never could be God at all ; and it is still as clear that if he became man when divested of these properties, then God was never incarnate, for before his incarnation he ceased to be God. But still he brought a Godhead person, and



this was something divine. Now admitting for a moment the fearful supposition, that God could divest himself of his Godhead properties, and yet retain his Godhead personality, and thus become incarnate, it is clear that he was only partially God. Divested of all his Godhead properties, he could not be "perfect God." Now besides that this notion, as I have elsewhere shewn, goes directly and immediately to the establishment of atheism, I would ask how could Christ manifest to us the properties of the Godhead, the great purpose of his coming, if before he came he divested himself of all those properties, for the very purpose of manifesting which he was made man? But the fact is, that divested of these properties, supposing the thing possible, he is divested at the same time of all personality. In that case the *λογος προφορικος* he might be; the *λογος ενδιαθετος* he could not possibly be. It is therefore of the utmost importance to believe that he was 'perfect God and perfect man;' and happily the evidence of this truth is as abundant, as the reception of it is important. We have not a Saviour in whom dwelt a limited, shackled, and divided divinity, but a Saviour in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

As we believe that when the "Word was made flesh," the two natures were so united in him, that they never have been, and never can be separated; we hold it no less essential to believe, that these two natures remained always perfectly distinct in the one person of Christ. The Divinity was not, and could



not be converted into flesh, for it is not capable of change. As little could the flesh be changed into the Divinity, for that also would have been to produce a change in the Divinity, which is impossible ; and it would have been to create a portion of the Divinity, which is equally impossible. The two natures therefore remain, inseparably united, and at the same time unmingled and perfectly distinct. Nothing can be more fatal than to suppose that the will of the Godhead and the will of the manhood were both merged in the one will of the Christ ; thus by some unintelligible and unimaginable mingling of the two, producing something that instead of being both God and Man, is neither the one nor the other. Of this error I do not apprehend that, in the present age we are in any great danger, though the guilt of holding it has been loudly charged upon the Church. I have met with it no where, however, excepting in the writings of some of those who make the charge, where it may be seen occasionally broadly stated, as a very essential portion of Christian doctrine. A sense of decency might, I think, secure the Church from any such charge from such a quarter.

We believe, then, and that upon abundant Scripture evidence, that when the “ Word was made flesh,” he became Man, *αληθως, τελως, αδιαρειως, ασυγχυτως*. And we believe no less firmly, that the Man was truly and perfectly God, existing ‘in two distinct natures and one person for ever.’

Our Saviour is in scripture called God’s “ holy

child Jesus." This refers specifically to his humanity ; for before his Incarnation he was the Son of God, but not his child. But when he became the child of God by Incarnation, he was a holy child, and consequently untainted by that lusting of the flesh against the Spirit, which attaches the character of unholiness to all the fallen race of Adam. Moreover he is called " the holy one of God." This too is an appellation which could not be applied to him before his Incarnation, but which he receives in consequence of his manhood ; for it would be absurd to say that God is the Holy One of himself. Hence neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost is ever called the " Holy One of God," for neither of them was ever incarnate. But could that humanity, in consequence of which our Lord receives this title, be fallen, sinful humanity ? I can conceive nothing more irrational than the supposition that he acquired the peculiar and distinguishing title of " the Holy One of God," just by taking into personal and perpetual union with himself that which was fallen and sinful.

A text of much importance in the present controversy is the following,—“ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.”<sup>1</sup> Here Christ is declared to have been sent “ in the *likeness* of sinful flesh.” Now had his flesh been really sinful flesh, how could it possibly be also like sinful

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 3.

flesh? Two things completely exclude *likeness*, either total opposition or entire identity. Had the flesh of Christ been *in all respects* different from sinful flesh, then it could not with truth have been said to be in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. And it is equally plain, that had it been *in all respects* the same as sinful flesh, that is, had it been sinful flesh, it could with as little truth have been said to be in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. I cannot conceive a plainer, or a more decisive text,—a clearer or more unequivocal testimony to the fact that the flesh of Christ was not sinful flesh, but in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. And I would put it to my reader, whether he be capable of believing that any man, reading this text without a previous hypothesis in his head, ever did draw, or ever could by any possibility draw from it, the conclusion that the flesh of Christ was sinful flesh,—a conclusion in such direct opposition to its plain, simple meaning?

This text stands as a barrier against many heresies, and has consequently been more violently distorted, in order to wring from it a meaning that it will not without much torture express, than perhaps any other. It was first laid hold of by the Gnostics, who attempted to prove from it that Christ had not real flesh, but only the likeness of flesh. Their Catholic opponents, to a man, maintained that the likeness was intended to qualify, not the word *flesh*, which was real, but the word *sinful*, because his flesh was not sinful. In this it must be admitted that they had a

much harder task than we who have to defend the literal meaning of the text, from a much more palpable, and much less plausible perversion than that of the Gnostics. How they performed their work, I shall shew by an example, which will at the same time have the effect of confirming the literal interpretation which I have given above,—if indeed I may call that an interpretation at all, which consists in merely understanding words to mean, what they express as plainly, as any interpretation can do for them. ‘For this purpose, therefore, the Son was sent in the likeness of flesh of sin, that he might redeem the flesh of sin in a similar, that is, in a fleshly substance which might be like to sinful flesh, while itself was *not sinful*. For this will shew the power of God, if he accomplish our salvation in a similar substance. For it would be no great matter were the Spirit of God to remedy flesh ; but if flesh *like* to sinful flesh, while it is flesh, but *not* sinful should do so : thus the *likeness* will belong to the words *of sin*,<sup>1</sup> and not infer a denial of the *substance*. For he would not have added *of sin*, if he had intended the likeness of the *substance* to be understood, so as to deny its reality. In that case he would only have said, the likeness *of flesh*, and not *of flesh of sin*. When, therefore, he hath thus expressed it—“in the likeness

<sup>1</sup> The Greek of Rom. viii. 3, is *ἐν ὁμοιωματι σαρκος ἁμαρτίας*, literally, *in the likeness of flesh of sin*. In our translation it is, with perfect propriety, rendered *sinful flesh*. The two expressions are perfectly equivalent, and I use the one or the other just as the convenience of the sentence in which it occurs may require.



of *flesh of sin*," he hath both established the substance, that is, the flesh; and hath referred the *likeness* to the vice of the substance, that is, to sin."<sup>1</sup> To so clear an exposition of the text I know not what the Gnostic can possibly object. And if the Gnostic perversion of the text will not stand, in opposition to the simple Catholic view of it, then no other can hope to be received, for no other that I have met with, is at all to be compared with it, in point of plausibility.

The text next fell into the hands of the Pelagians, who felt it absolutely necessary to get its plain meaning set aside. They were capable of going great lengths; but still they had some scruples which the riper learning of modern times has very completely dissipated, and did not pretend that this text actually teaches their doctrine in itself, and would no doubt have very gladly omitted all notice of it. This however could not be done, for when it is declared that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, the conclusion seems inevitable that, with the single exception of his flesh, all human flesh is sinful; and

<sup>1</sup> Ob hoc igitur Missum Filium in similitudinem carnis peccati ut carnem simili substantia redimeret, id est, carnea, quæ peccatrici carni similis esset, quum peccatrix ipsa non esset. Nam et hæc erit Dei virtus, in substantia pari perficere salutem. Non enim magnum, si Spiritus Dei carnem remediaret; sed si caro consimilis peccatrici, dum caro est, sed non peccati. Ita similitudo ad titulum peccati pertinebit, non ad substantiæ mendacium. Nam nec addidisset, *peccati*, si substantiæ similitudinem vellet intelligi, ut negaret veritatem. Tantum enim *carnis* posuisset, non et *peccati*. Quum vero tunc sic struxerit, *carnis peccati*, et substantiam confirmavit, id est, carnem; et similitudinem ad vitium substantiæ retulit, id est, ad peccatum. *Tertullianus adversus Marcionem, Lib. 5, Cap. 14.*



thus the corruption of the human heart is established, and Pelagianism ruined. Urged by necessity therefore, they laboured not only to neutralize the force of the text, but to draw from it an authority in favour of their system. The way in which they went to work was this : they endeavoured to show that there is no difference whatever between our flesh and that of Christ,—that his flesh was just such as ours : and then, as it was universally admitted by all, whether Catholics or heretics,<sup>1</sup> that the flesh of Christ was not, and could not possibly be sinful, consequently our flesh, which is the same as his, is not sinful ; and the doctrine of original sin, and our consequent dependence upon the grace of God for all good, cannot be true. This was no doubt also a sufficiently ingenious perversion of the text, though far inferior in that respect, to the comment of the Gnostics. Their reasonings were met by *Augustine*, the first, and, as far as my experience goes, the ablest opponent of that pernicious system. I cannot think that I am over stating the matter when I say, that he has quoted this text a hundred times, and uniformly understands it in its simple literal meaning. The conclusion which he draws from it is, that our flesh must be sinful, else it could not be said of the Word that when he was made flesh, he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, for this plain reason, that if there be no such thing as sinful flesh, then there can be no such thing as the

<sup>1</sup> One exception to this, occurring in the person of Parmenianus the Donatist, will be noticed afterwards.

*likeness* of sinful flesh, for that would be the likeness of nothing. He farther argues, therefore, that if it be true that there is no difference between our flesh and that of Christ, then the inference must of necessity be, that the flesh of Christ was sinful, since that ours is so is indisputable. As I have given *Tertullian's* refutation of the Gnostic comment upon this much abused passage, I shall give one out of many of *Augustine's* refutations of the Pelagian comment,—‘ Why should you attempt, by laborious arguments, to bring yourself to the very precipice of impiety, saying, that ‘ the flesh of Christ, because it was born of Mary, whose flesh, like that of all others, was propagated from Adam, differs nothing from sinful flesh ; and the Apostle may have been understood to have spoken without distinction when he said that he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh : ’ nay rather insisting that ‘ there is no sinful flesh, lest the flesh of Christ should be so ? ’ What, then, means, “ the likeness of sinful flesh,” if there be no sinful flesh ? You say that I do not understand the Apostle’s meaning. You, however, have not so expounded it, that by your instruction, we might know, how one thing can be like another thing which has no existence. If none but a madman would say this, and there be no doubt that the flesh of Christ is *not* sinful flesh, but *like* sinful flesh, what remains for us to understand, but that, *his flesh excepted*, all other human flesh is sinful ? And hence it appears, that that concupiscence by which Christ

refused to be conceived, is the means of propagating evil in the human race; because the body of Mary, though derived from concupiscence, did not transmit it to that body which she did not by it conceive. In short, whosoever denies that the body of Christ is therefore said to be in the likeness of sinful flesh, because all other human flesh is sinful; and so compares the flesh of Christ to the flesh of other men that are born, as to say that they are of equal purity, discovers himself to be a detestable heretic.’<sup>1</sup> This comment of *Augustine* will probably be considered as vindicating the passage from the gloss of the Pelagians, as satisfactorily as *Tertullian’s* comment vindicated it against that of the Gnostics.

The text has now been taken up by those who maintain the sinfulness of our Lord’s flesh. They

<sup>1</sup> Quid est quod laboras magnis argumentationibus pervenire ad impietatis abruptum, ut *Christi caro, quia de Maria natus est, cujus Virginis caro, sicut ceterorum omnium et Adam fuerat propagata, nihil distet a carne peccati, et sine ulla distinctione Apostolus dixisse credatur, eum fuisse missam in similitudine carnis peccati*; immo potius instes, ut nulla sit caro peccati, ne hoc sit et Christi? Quid est ergo, similitudo carnis peccati, si nulla est caro peccati? Sed hanc apostolicam sententiam me non intellexisse dixisti: nec eam tamen exposuisti, ut te doctore nossemus, quod aliqua res possit esse similis ei rei quæ non est. Quod si dementis est dicere, et sine dubio caro Christi non est caro peccati, sed similis carni peccati; quid restat ut intelligamus, nisi, ea excepta, omnem reliquam humanam carnem esse peccati? Et hinc apparet illam concupiscentiam, per quam Christus concipi noluit, fecisse in genere humano propaginem mali: quia Mariæ corpus, quamvis inde venerit, tamen eam non trajecit in corpus quod non inde concepit. Ceterum, corpus Christi inde dictum esse in similitudine carnis peccati, quia omnis alia hominum caro peccati est, quis-quis negat; et carnem Christi ita carni comparat nascentium hominum ceterorum, ut asserat utramque esse puritatis æqualis, detestandus hereticus invenitur. *Contra Julianum, Lib. 5, Cap. 15.*

adopt substantially the Pelagian interpretation of it, though they draw from it a directly opposite conclusion. The Pelagian argument was this—There is no difference between our flesh and that of Christ ; but the flesh of Christ could not possibly be sinful ; therefore our flesh is not sinful. The modern argument is this—There is no difference between our flesh and that of Christ ; but our flesh is undeniably sinful flesh ; therefore the flesh of Christ was also sinful. They agree in maintaining that there is no difference between our flesh and that of Christ, but the modern interpreter, with a hardihood which it appears that Pelagianism could not inspire, asserts that this identity of our flesh and that of Christ is the direct literal declaration of the text. This is a flight beyond the reach of *Julian*, who only said that the Apostle might be understood to have spoken without any distinction. And yet by all that we know of him, we should be far from thinking him to have been overburdened with scruples. Gennadius tells us, what indeed is acknowledged by all, that he was extensively acquainted with both Greek and Roman literature. But Marius Mercator places a sad blot on the picture, when he states,—a statement fully borne out by all that I have read of his writings —that he was a loquacious, ostentatious sciolist. *Augustine*, who had been his father's friend, and was not disposed to speak with unnecessary severity of him, calls him 'a most confident youth,' and describes him as being 'in discussion most



loquacious, in controversy most calumnious, in profession most deceitful.' But with all his skill in Greek literature, *Julian* had not sagacity to discover, what would have been of so great advantage to him, that ὁμοιωμα literally means *identity*. The discovery has now been made, the Pelagian interpretation of the text under discussion confirmed, and a much worse than Pelagian heresy founded upon it. As *Augustine* is one of the fathers quoted in support of the assertion that all the fathers hold the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's humanity, and support those interpretations of scripture by which it is maintained, I cannot do better than again avail myself of the language of that venerable saint, and thus at once still farther establish the literal meaning of the text, and rescue his memory from the imputation cast upon it.

In reply to the reproach of *Julian*, who charges with Manichæism those who make a distinction between our flesh and that of Christ, he says,—  
'They are not Manichæans who distinguish the flesh of Christ from the community of our nature; but they who maintain that Christ had no flesh. Therefore in joining to us the Manichæans, who are as deeply deserving of condemnation as yourselves, you aid their cause, saying that they distinguish the flesh of Christ from the community of our nature; just as if they admitted Christ to have flesh, which could in any way be distinguished from ours. Leave then the Manichæans who differ much from both you and us, as to the flesh of Christ, and deal with us in



your discussion of the matter, because with us you confess the flesh of Christ, though after a different manner. For neither do we distinguish the flesh of Christ from the community of the nature and substance of our flesh, but from the community of its viciousness. For our flesh is sinful flesh, on account of which his is called, not the likeness of flesh, because it is real flesh, but the likeness of sinful flesh, because sinful flesh it is not. If, then, our flesh were not sinful flesh, how, I ask, could the flesh of Christ be the likeness of sinful flesh? Are you so utterly wild as to say that a thing can be *like*, when nothing exists to which it is like? Hear Hilary, a catholic doctor, whom, whatever you may think of him, you certainly cannot call a Manichæan, who, when speaking of the flesh of Christ, says—‘Therefore when he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, as he had flesh, so had he not sin; but because all flesh is from sin, derived namely from the sin of Adam, he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, there being in him, not sin, but the likeness of sinful flesh.’ What wilt thou say to this, thou double distilled extract of the super-sublimated quintessence of all that is disgraceful in controversy? Was Hilary too a Manichæan? But let me not be angry at your reproaches, which I receive in common, not only with Hilary and other ministers of Christ, but even with the very flesh of Christ, to which you have not feared to offer such a reproach as to dare to make it equal to the other flesh of men, which, it is certain

is sinful, unless it be falsely said that Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh.’<sup>1</sup>

This may be considered as the dying testimony of *Augustine*, as it occurs near the end of a work which he left unfinished at his death. It will be seen with what irrepressible detestation he speaks of the doctrine of the sinfulness of the Saviour’s flesh, and how he pours out upon *Julian* for giving an interpretation of the text under discussion, which naturally leads to that doctrine, a string of superla-

<sup>1</sup> Manichæi non sunt, qui carnem Christi a naturæ nostræ communione distinguunt; sed qui nullam carnem Christum habuisse contendunt. Nobis itaque jungendo Manichæos, anathemandos vobiscum atque damnandos, etiam eorum sublevas causam, dicens eos carnem Christi a naturæ nostræ communione distinguere: quasi carnem Christum habere fateantur, quam quoquo modo a nostra carne distinguant. Dimitte illos multum a nobis, multumque et a vobis, in ista de carne Christi distantes; nobiscum age quod agis; quia nobiscum carnem Christi, etsi dissimilitu, confiteris. Nec nos enim eam a naturæ atque substantiæ carnis nostræ, sed a vitii communione distinguimus. Caro est enim nostra peccati: propter quod illa dicta est, non similitudo carnis, quia vera caro est; sed similitudo carnis peccati, quia peccati caro non est. Si ergo peccati caro, caro nostra non esset; quomodo, rogo te, similitudo carnis peccati caro Christi esset? An usque adeo desipis, ut dicas aliquid simile esse, sed cui simile sit non esse? Hilarius audi catholicum antistitem, quem certe, quidquid de illo sentias, Manichæum non potes dicere: qui cum de Christi carne loqueretur, ‘Ergo cum missus est, inquit, in similitudine carnis peccati, non sicut carnem habuit, ita habuit et peccatum; sed quia ex peccato omnis caro est, a peccato scilicet Adam parente deducta, in similitudine peccati carnis est missus, existente in eo, non peccato, sed peccati carnis similitudine.’ Quid ad ista dicturus es, improbissime, loquacissime, contumeliosissime, calumniosissime? Numquid et Hilarius Manichæus est? Sed absit ut tuas accipere dedigner injurias, non solum cum Hilario, ceteris que ministris Christi, sed etiam cum ipsa carne Christi, cui tantam facere non expavescis injuriam, ut audeas eam coæquare ceteræ hominum carni, quam carnem constat esse peccati; si non mendaciter dictum est, Christum in similitudine carnis venisse peccati.’ *Operis Imperfecti contra Julianum*, Lib. VI. cap. xxxiii.

tives which would have graced the iron style of the stern *Tertullian*. And when the aged saint was thus descending into the grave, with a protest against so impious a tenet on his lips, could he possibly anticipate that men would arise so devoted to that tenet, as to profane his memory by attaching to his venerable name the infamy of maintaining a tenet which he characterizes in terms not more severe than they are just, as a ‘detestable heresy,’ and as an ‘outrageous blasphemy?’ And have his merits in the support of truth been so trifling that his name may be connected, in open defiance of truth, with a tenet that ploughs up the very foundations of Christianity, while no hand is lifted up in his defence? It would well become every Christian who can handle a pen, to use that pen in encircling the name of *Augustine* with the motto,—*Noli me tangere*. Shame on the man who can pass his cairn without adding a stone to it. With what justice he has been cited as a patron of the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh, will be farther seen by and by; but in the mean time, I think we may rest perfectly satisfied, that, after all the learned efforts to distort the phrase “the likeness of sinful flesh,” so as to wring from it any meaning save that which it so plainly expresses, *likeness* really means neither more nor less than *likeness*, and that therefore it is an undeniable scriptural truth that Christ came *not* in sinful flesh, but “in the *likeness* of sinful flesh.”

I would now refer to the declaration, “And being

found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”<sup>1</sup> The only remark that I find it necessary to make upon this verse is, that his humbling himself so as to become obedient unto death, is stated to have been *subsequent* to his being found in fashion as a man ; a statement directly opposed to the supposition that he unavoidably became subject to death when he became man. Even *after* he became man, his submitting to die, was an act not of necessity, but of obedience ;—an act flowing, not from the weakness of the nature assumed, which never bore down nor diminished the power of the Word, but from the condescension of his grace. If I may be permitted to add a practical commentary to this verse, I know of none equal to that furnished by the same writer—“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”<sup>2</sup>

I beg the reader next to refer to Hebrews vii. and to read the first twelve verses, which would be too long here to copy. He will thus see that one of the points of distinction between Christ and Levi is, that Levi paid tithes in Abraham, while Christ did not. Both, however, were alike in the loins of the patriarch when Melchizedeck met him. It is plain, however, that the one was in his loins in a sense in which the other was not. What constituted the difference is sufficiently obvious. Abraham was not only the

<sup>1</sup> Philip. ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 9.



natural progenitor, but the federal representative of Levi, and all the blessings conferred upon the latter, were conferred upon him in consequence of the covenant made with the former. Of Christ Abraham was also the natural progenitor ; the federal representative he was not. If he had been so, then had it been as true of Christ as of Levi, that he paid tithes in Abraham, and was also blessed in him ; and consequently as “without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better,” Melchizedek was not the type, but the superior of Christ ; and blessed not only him who “had the promises,” but him also who gave the promises, and upon whose atonement the fulfilment of them all depends. Now if Christ did not pay tithes in Abraham, as Levi did, for the same reason he did not fall in Adam, as all other men did. The total and utter absurdity, not of this or that doctrine of Christianity, but of the whole system, which necessarily and directly flows from the supposition that Christ was federally represented by, and fell in Adam, I need not stop to point out. It is sufficient to remark that he was, and could be in Adam no otherwise than he was in Abraham. Tucker, the father of the heresy that Christ took a sinful nature, says, “When it is declared that in Adam all have sinned, no exception is made of him.” He is, however, mistaken. The exception which is taken to his having paid tithes in Abraham, is an exception which applies, with unabated force, to his having sinned in Adam. It may be urged, and indeed has been urged,



that when Abraham paid tithes, Christ not only did not pay them, but was actually the person who received them. Upon this however I do not insist. It is quite enough to take the declaration of the Apostle that he did not pay them ; and consequently that for the same reason, he did not fall in Adam. Indeed that he fell in Adam, and became involved in all the consequences of the fall, just as much as any other of his race ; and that having first, as the seed of the fallen man, become liable to all these consequences, he then appeared to him, and promised that as the “ seed of the woman,” he would deliver him from the consequences, is a supposition so utterly repugnant to both scripture and sense, so perfectly wild, that I shall not waste either my own time or that of my reader, in any examination of it. Let those, who insist that he fell in Adam, shew, if they can, how he was in Adam when he fell, in a different sense from that in which he was in Abraham when he paid tithes, and then the notion may be worth considering.

If then he neither fell nor sinned in Adam, did he sin personally ? This will not be said ; for though arguments are addressed to the public, in support of the tenet that he was fallen and sinful, which go directly and unavoidably to prove, that if he were not the chief of sinners, he cannot save the chief of sinners ; yet that he ever personally sinned will be, and has been vehemently denied. The conclusion then, appears to me, to be inevitable, that if he neither fell

nor sinned in Adam ; nor ever fell or sinned personally, then he was never fallen and sinful.

I would next refer to the doom denounced against the man who “ hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,” literally “ a common thing,” κοινον.<sup>1</sup> Now how are they who maintain that the humanity of Christ was fallen sinful humanity, to escape this doom ? For if to count his blood the blood of a fallen sinful man, such as we are, be not to count it a common thing, then I know not how that sin can be committed. I am well enough aware that it may be said that the Apostle is here condemning merely a practical irreverence for the blood of Christ. But even supposing this to be true, it is very plain that where a practice is bad, the doctrine that sanctions it is still worse.

Let us now read the following passage—“ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; (For the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews x. 29.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John i. 1.

purpose for which I quote this passage does not require me to enter into any lengthened commentary upon it. It will be observed that the Apostle begins his epistle in the same manner as he begins his Gospel, stating at once and without preamble, the most important proposition which he means to maintain. He commences the Gospel by declaring the Divinity of the Word. Here he has in his eye those who denied the humanity of our Lord, maintaining that he was a mere phantom, into which the Æon Christ descended at his baptism, and dwelt for the purpose of making himself visible. He therefore commences his epistle in the same bold abruptness of style which he had used in his Gospel, declaring the reality of our Lord's humanity; asserting that it was no phantom made perceptible to one of our senses, but a reality cognizable by them all,—something to be heard, and felt, and handled, as well as seen. It was, we may reasonably suppose, in consequence of this strong and decisive testimony, that some of the Docetæ, who believed the humanity of Christ to be a mere phantom, were led to say that that phantom was so compacted by a particular operation of God, as to be not only visible, but also palpable, and even passible, as Irenæus tells us that some of them taught. Now if the tenet that the humanity of Christ was not only real, but fallen sinful humanity, be not only true, but be the foundation of all sound doctrine, as we are assured that it is, then here the Apostle might not merely have been expected to teach it, but was im-

periously required to teach it, and that in terms as direct and unambiguous, as those in which he teaches the reality of that humanity. How cordially he detested, and how zealously he opposed the heresy which denies that "Christ has come in the flesh," no reader of this epistle needs to be told. How then does it happen that he omits distinctly to state, not only that he had come in the flesh, but that he had come in fallen sinful flesh? Would our modern theologians have acted thus? Would they have left the argument so lame, and such a vital doctrine so doubtfully expressed? No. They profess to have discovered that the heresy which the Apostle condemns has infected the Church at the present day. They may be right, though I have found no traces of it. It cannot at least be even pretended that the heresy is either so openly avowed, or carried to so pernicious an extent, or productive of so fatal effects, as in the time of John. Yet though the danger is certainly less urgent, how cold, how feeble, how nerveless the language of this "Son of Thunder" upon the subject, when compared with the loud, the reiterated, the emphatic denunciations to which we are now accustomed, against all who doubt or deny that Christ came in sinful flesh! The character of that flesh they do not leave as a matter of doubtful importance. They do not merely state that he was really man, leaving it to be inferred that therefore he must have been a fallen sinful man, an inference which all reason and all scripture disowns; but they state

that he was fallen and sinful with a distinctness, and urge it with an earnestness which shews how very far,—if the tenet be true,—the holy Apostle was inferior to them in knowledge of the truth, and in zeal for its interests.

If it be true that the humanity of our Lord was fallen sinful humanity, there is no avoiding this severe and painful reflection upon the Apostle. He saw the heresy which denies that Christ had come in the flesh, raging like “the destruction that wasteth at noon day,” perverting the principles, and overthrowing the faith of many. And yet while he most distinctly teaches the reality of Christ’s flesh, he neglected to teach,—he has no where distinctly said, that that flesh was fallen and sinful. This is bad, but what is still worse, he has most distinctly taught the very reverse. He has not more clearly taught the reality of Christ’s flesh, than he has taught its perfect freedom from all sinfulness. For what is it that was seen, and heard, and handled? Not the Divinity surely, but the humanity of our Lord. Yet that which was seen, and heard, and handled was “the Word of life,” “the Life,” “Eternal life.” While he strongly asserts the reality of his flesh, he no less strongly guards against the equally fatal extreme of supposing it to be fallen, sinful flesh; and therefore studiously accumulates upon that humanity which was seen, and heard, and felt, all the epithets which more peculiarly belong to the Divine nature, but which, from the indivisible unity of his person,



the Apostle shews may with perfect propriety be applied to either nature ; a rule which, as I have already had occasion to remark, is observed by all the sacred writers, to the utter condemnation of the doctrine of his fallen manhood. And as he commences, so does he close his epistle with the declaration that Jesus Christ the Son of God, is the true God and Eternal Life. It is not Jesus apart, nor Christ apart, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is “ the true God and Eternal Life.” The heresy which teaches that the humanity of our Lord was fallen and sinful, could not well be more effectually met, than by a continued comment upon the whole of this most delightful and instructive epistle. This however would be altogether out of place here ; I therefore proceed to another passage of Scripture, and the only other which I shall produce on the present occasion.

The passage to which I refer is the following,—  
“ For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage. For verily he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for

the sins of the people.”<sup>1</sup> In verse 14, the Apostle states the fact of the Incarnation, declaring that Christ became a partaker of flesh and blood. He then states the reason why he took flesh and blood, —that he might destroy death and him that had the power of death. He then shews why it was necessary that he should take human nature, rather than any higher created nature. He came not to help, but to subdue fallen angels. He came to help fallen men; and therefore it behoved him to be made like to them. The result of the whole is a striking and an affecting contrast between the sovereignty of God who chose to save fallen man in preference to fallen angels; and the unspeakable goodness of God, who, in order to save men, assumed their nature.

All this appears to me perfectly plain, and is the way in which I have always been accustomed to understand this passage, from a period long before the present controversy existed. I am perfectly aware however that there exists a strong indisposition to receive this view of the passage, even among those who are as little disposed to admit the sinfulness of Christ’s humanity as I am. Their idea is, that if verse 16 be understood, as the common version naturally suggests, that Christ had power to choose whether he would assume the human or angelic nature, then his

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews ii. 14. It will be observed that I have adopted the marginal translation of verse 16, which I consider as being in this instance, as I think it is in a great majority of instances, very superior to that placed in the text.

pre-existence is proved ; for he could not have chosen which he would assume, if he had not existed previous to his assumption of either. But they suppose that if the marginal reading be admitted, and the meaning be that Christ saved not angels but men, then the verse furnishes no argument for his pre-existence. Hence Socinians are very anxious to maintain the accuracy of the marginal reading, while the orthodox are no less anxious to vindicate the received text. Now I would remark that in translating or commenting upon a text of Scripture, we are not at liberty to depart from the plain literal meaning, for the purpose of producing an argument against Socinianism. Socinians do not, and cannot pretend that the verse in question furnishes any argument in their favour. They merely hope, by maintaining the marginal reading, to escape a very direct argument against their system. Did the necessity of the case require, I should have no hesitation in giving up the argument for the pre-existence of our Lord, that is drawn from this text ; because that is a doctrine so clearly, and so emphatically interwoven into the Gospel, that if that doctrine be so doubtful, as to render it necessary to mistranslate, or misinterpret a single text in support of it, we may as well give up Christianity altogether. But the fact is, that the pre-existence of Christ is as certainly and as decidedly,—though not quite so obviously, I grant—taught by the ancient, as by the modern interpretation of the passage. If we ever should lose our argument, therefore, against

Socialism, by adopting the anciently received meaning of the text, that loss, amidst such abundance, is little to be regretted. Still less need we hesitate to admit that meaning, when, in reality, we are required to make no such sacrifice ; as the passage, understood in either way, decidedly proves the pre-existence of Christ.

With this view of the matter, I cannot admit that verse 16 contains a declaration of the Incarnation. The following are my reasons. In the beginning of the passage quoted, the fact of the Incarnation is declared, together with the effect to be produced by it. The passage ends by declaring the ground upon which the Incarnation was necessary to the production of that effect. Now to interpose between these, merely a reiterated declaration of the fact, is, at least as far as I can see, to introduce a bald unmeaning tautology, which neither results from what precedes it, nor leads to what follows, nor introduces one new idea ; for that the nature in which Christ appeared was not the angelic, but the human nature, I suppose the most prejudiced Jew did not need to be taught. But let verse 16 be a declaration of the fact, that it was the sovereign will of God to extend to men, that deliverance from death which he extended not to fallen angels, and that on this account it was necessary that he should, by Incarnation, be like unto those whom he adopted as his brethren, and then the verse both naturally flows from what precedes it, and naturally calls for the conclusion which follows it. Let the

meaning now commonly insisted upon be admitted, and the following is no caricature, but a fair paraphrase of the train of reasoning employed :—‘ For as we are men, therefore, that he might destroy death, he also became a man, for he became not an angel but a man, therefore it behoved him to become man.’ Adopt the ancient meaning, and a similar paraphrase will run thus—‘ For as we are men, therefore that he might destroy death, he also became a man ; for as he came to save not angels, but men, therefore it behoved him to become, not an angel, but a man.’ I cannot hesitate as to which of these two modes of reasoning I am to prefer.

Another reason why I prefer the meaning derived from the marginal reading, to that suggested by the received reading is, that the former is the ancient interpretation, adopted when there seemed to be no reason for adopting any other view than that naturally suggested by the words of the text ; whereas the latter was never heard of till the Vulgate by the use of the ambiguous word *assumo*, and the terror of Socinianism, furnished a very natural introduction to it. In support of this statement, it would be no difficult matter to accumulate testimonies from the Greek fathers ; but I suppose it will be perfectly sufficient to produce the testimony of *Ernesti* as quoted by *Schleusner*. The latter writer, citing the original of Heb. ii. 16, thus translates it, and comments upon it,—‘ For he assisted not angels, but the seed of Abraham, where *ἐπιλαμβανεισθαι* is synonymous with



ἐοηθῆσαι in verse 18. Compare Ernesti's interpretation of the New Testament, p. 201, who teaches, that this is the only true and ancient interpretation given of this place by the whole Greek church; but that the common explanation of it concerning the incarnation, or of the assumption not of the angelic but human nature, arose among the Latins, who depended upon the word *assumat*, which the Vulgate uses.'<sup>1</sup> To the weight of the testimony borne by two such distinguished writers it is adding nothing to say, that, from personal examination, I am perfectly satisfied as to the accuracy of that testimony; and, as far as authority is concerned, I greatly prefer, especially in such a case, the unbiassed interpretation of the Greek church, to the biassed,—naturally and blamelessly biassed, I grant,—but still the biassed interpretation of the Latin church.

I prefer the former interpretation to the latter also, because the former is the simple literal translation of the text, whereas we cannot get at the latter without an addition to the text, for which I can see no warrant. No rule, I apprehend, is better established than this, that we are not at liberty to make any addition to a text, nor in the slightest degree to depart

<sup>1</sup> Non enim angelis auxilium præstitit, sed posteris Abrahami, ubi ἐπιλαμ-  
βανέσθαι est idem quod ἐοηθῆσαι verse 18. Comp. Ernesti Interpr. N. T.  
p. 201. qui docuit, hanc esse unice veram et antiquam totius ecclesiæ græcæ  
hujus loci interpretationem, vulgarem vero de incarnatione, seu de *assumptione*  
naturæ non angelicæ, sed humanæ, explicationem ortam esse ab Latinis, qui  
voce *assumat*, qua usus est *Vulgatus*, nitebantur. *Schleusneri Lexicon in*  
*N. T. sub voce ἐπιλαμβάνω.*

from its plain literal meaning, without an obvious necessity. But where is the necessity here? We make an addition to the text for the purpose of introducing an unmeaning repetition of the fact of the incarnation, which the Apostle had just declared already; while we utterly take away the argument by which he proves the necessity of the incarnation. He says that because it was not angels, but men whom he helped, therefore was it necessary that he should be made like them. But let us alter the text of verse 16, so as to make it signify that Christ took not the angelic but the human nature, and what follows is just repetition accumulated upon repetition. He became not an angel but a man, therefore it behoved him to be made a man. I cannot think that any addition to the text is authorized which brings out such reasoning as this. And on the contrary, to say that because men and not angels were the beings whom he helped, therefore it was necessary that he should become a man, does not strike me as being so defective, as to require to be filled up at the expence of an addition to the text.

Besides, if an addition is to be made to the text at all, is it quite certain that *nature* is the proper addition? I think not. At least if we are not to be bound by the letter of the text, I am quite as much at liberty to speculate upon what it ought to be as another; and therefore I would propose that the interpolated word should be, not *nature*, but *sins*,

and that the verse should be read thus, "For verily he took not on him the sins of angels; but he took on him the sins of the seed of Abraham." And were it worth while to speculate upon the comparative merits of two equally unnecessary additions to the text, I cannot think that it would be at all difficult to shew the great superiority of the latter word to the former.<sup>1</sup>

These reasons have always appeared to me very decisively to establish the superiority of the ancient over the modern interpretation of the passage: and in this view of it I have felt, and still feel myself perfectly entitled, nay, imperiously bound, to consider it as expressive of the glorious and consummating exemplification of a principle, the exemplification of which is often recorded in Scripture. The principle to which I refer is the preference of the younger to the elder. Of the two first-born of men, Cain and Abel, the younger was chosen, and the elder rejected. Of the three sons of Noah, the second great progenitor of mankind, Shem the youngest was chosen as the heir of promise. Of the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, though the patriarch repeatedly prayed, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee," it was said, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

<sup>1</sup> They who are accustomed to parallelism will probably find, that the passage quoted, down to the word 'brethren' in verse 17, forms a very perfect *Epanodos*, which, if I have arranged it correctly, is completely destroyed by the modern interpretation of verse 16, against which I am contending. My arrangement of the passage I do not produce, as I am very far from relying upon its correctness.

Of the two sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, before they were born, it was said, “the elder shall serve the younger.” Of the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim the younger was preferred to Manasseh the elder. Of the sons of Jesse, David the youngest, and whom his father did not even think it worth while to present to the prophet, was chosen to be king over Israel. And, to name no more, of all the sons of David, Solomon was chosen to build a temple to the Lord.

Now a fact of this nature so frequently occurring, and so sedulously recorded, must be considered as pointedly intended to direct our attention to the principle involved in it; and the Apostle Paul, in expounding one of these instances, has taught us how we are to understand all the next. They are intended to manifest the sovereignty of the Lord,—to shew that he seeth not as man seeth, nor chooseth as man would choose,—to show that all power and all excellency are from God alone. And therefore “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are.” And why? “That no flesh should glory in his presence,”—that all should own that whatever grace or goodness or excellency is in them, it is not from themselves, but from God; and that if they



differ from others, it is God alone that maketh them to differ. This principle then, which is involved in the preference of the younger to the elder, and to which our attention is directed not once nor twice, but many times, is seen in all the dispensations of God, that his own sovereignty may be manifested in them all. Thus while every thing in the works of men has a natural tendency to degenerate, God has from the beginning shewn that his works have a very different character ; and are continually going on from good to better in endless progression ; and that one dispensation only prepares the way for, and gives place to one that is more perfect. Thus the patriarchal dispensation prepared the way for the Mosaic ; the Mosaic for the Christian ; the present state of the Christian for its millennial state ; and that for something still more glorious. And thus when the gospel was first established, it was not by the wisdom, the wealth, or the power of man, but by feeble means in opposition to all these, lest its success should have been attributed to the efficacy of the means, rather than to the power of God. The treasure was committed to earthen vessels, that the excellence of its power might be seen to be of God.

All these are striking manifestations of the sovereignty of God. They are, however, partial and limited and obscure exhibitions of it, when compared with the universal and glorious manifestation of it referred to in the passage under discussion, where the choice lay not between one individual and another,



nor between one nation and another, but between two lost WORLDS. There stood before God two fallen families,—fallen angels and fallen men. Alike they were doomed to woe for their sins, and unless an Almighty arm should lay hold on them, alike would they both have sunk in remediless ruin. It belonged to God alone to determine whether he would save one or both of these families, or leave them both to perish. And when he had announced his intention to save one of these families, that the work of their redemption might afford a new manifestation of the divine perfections, and give a more clear and more glorious revelation of these perfections than his creatures could even otherwise have seen, it still remained with him to determine which of the two fallen families should be chosen, as the objects in whose salvation this manifestation should be made. And well does it become us to rejoice that here also the principle, to which our attention is so carefully directed throughout the whole course of Scripture, and so carefully directed that we might not fail to see, in this case, its most glorious exemplification was acted upon. The younger was preferred to the elder ; fallen men were chosen to salvation ; fallen angels were left to perish ; though carnal judgment would probably have made the choice to fall on the elder, and originally nobler family ; and would have left the meaner creature of clay to perish. This is the glorious and happy truth, so clearly and so pointedly expressed by the Apostle when he saith, “ He taketh not hold of angels ; but of the seed of

Abraham he taketh hold." He plainly expresses the unspeakable majesty of the Divine Sovereignty in choosing fallen men as the objects of that work of redemption, which, beyond all things else, reveals his own glorious character, rather than fallen angels, who, to the eye of sense, might perhaps seem to have a better claim. And with this view of the Divine Sovereignty, he combines the equally-astonishing view of the unspeakable condescension of the Divine love. Of one of these fallen families, who are alike in his hands, and not one word in favour of either of which might any created being venture to speak, he saith, "let them be reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day;" while of the other he saith, "deliver from going down into the pit, for I have found out a ransom." Here is his sovereignty. And what is the ransom for the race to be redeemed? "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." The eternal Son therefore becomes man, becomes partaker of flesh and blood, similar in all respects, sinfulness excepted, to the creatures of clay whom he came to redeem, and voluntarily submits to die in their stead, that they may live. Here is the depth of his love. And if it was a striking proof of the free and sovereign goodness of God, that he chose Israel when they were but "few men in number,"—"the fewest of all people," how much more illustrious a display of the same grace and goodness did he give, when he chose men in preference to angels, as the objects of redemption,

when these creatures of clay were few indeed,—the whole race consisting of only two individuals ! Who would have said, or who could have ventured to think, that these two would be chosen in preference to a world of fallen angels ? Any created judgment would have said, What are these two feeble individuals, that they should, for a moment be put into the scale against a multitude of angels ? If one of the fallen races may be saved, surely there cannot be a moment's hesitation as to which it should be. Of what consequence can be the loss of two earthly creatures, who may be so destroyed that none shall ever spring from them, compared with the loss of so many superior creatures ? But God determined in a different manner. He took not hold of fallen angels, but of fallen men he took hold. And why ? “ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

And while the Apostle is thus contrasting all that is venerable in the sovereignty of God, with all that is attractive in his love, he leads us to see why, in that revelation of the Divine perfections, which the redemption of fallen creatures alone could afford, the existence of more than one fallen race was necessary. Had there been but one fallen race, the lessons taught by the redemption of that race would have been taught imperfectly. It might have been supposed that there was something in the character of God, or in the situation of the fallen creature, or in the nature of sin, which rendered the offer of redemption, on the part of God, a matter not of choice, but of

necessity; and thus the sovereignty of God in the pardon of sin could not have been seen, nor could the danger and the hatefulness of sin have been displayed.

From this passage too, we are led to see one reason why fallen men were chosen to salvation, rather than fallen angels. For though we cannot in this world know the whole either of the grounds or of the results of the work of redemption, yet it is our duty and our privilege to trace them as far as we can. And I trust that it is not rashly intruding into things not seen, nor rudely violating the sanctity of that which God hath kept secret, nor speculating too curiously upon the designs of him who "giveth no account of his matters," to say, that had angels been selected as the objects of redemption, the lessons taught by redemption would have been the same, but they would not have been so impressively, nor so extensively taught. Not so impressively; because had the goodness of God been exhibited in the redemption of fallen angels, it might still have been doubted whether its extent were infinite,—whether it could have gone down to the lowest order of rational creatures, and have embraced even us worms of the dust in its ample range. Not so extensively; for had fallen angels been chosen as the objects of redemption, then that work would have been transacted in a sphere altogether beyond our view, and beyond the reach of our knowledge; so that at least one rational family of God, man, would have been



left without any of that knowledge of him, which that work alone is capable of conveying. Whereas when man was chosen as the object of redemption, the lessons taught by that work were taught to all the rational creatures of God. And the fact that now the character of God is known, as perfectly as created beings can know it, both to fallen and un-fallen angels, needs no proof. That it is through the work of redemption,—a work traced with intense interest by both, that this perfect knowledge is communicated, is suggested by almost every page of Scripture. That it stamps the fate of one class with the ineffaceable seal of despair; and that it gives to the other class an immoveable ground of assurance, that they shall never sin, and never suffer, might I think be clearly established, did the present subject authorize any speculations on the matter. The text under discussion very plainly states the necessity of the Saviour's taking the nature of those whom he came to save. He helped not angels, but men, and therefore the assumption of manhood was necessary. For the same reason had he helped angels, we must conclude that it would have been necessary that he should have become an angel. Not a hint however is given that in this case he must have become a fallen angel, that is, a devil; and neither is the remotest hint given that when he helped fallen men, he must of necessity become a fallen man. When he became man, he became cognizable by man. His words were audible to human ears; his deeds were



visible to human eyes. Possessing all the reality of our nature,—made flesh, and dwelling among us, we could behold his glory, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,”—he could manifest to us all the glories of the Godhead, while, being man, his “terror did not make us afraid.” But if we go beyond this and say, that in order to help sinful men, he must become a sinful man; we must go still farther and say, that to help the chief of sinners, he himself must become the chief of sinners. The necessity for his becoming man is obvious; for we could have learned nothing from, and received no atonement by, and have reposed no hope upon one, whom we could neither hear nor see nor know. That he should be fallen and sinful, to enable him to bring within the range of our observation and knowledge the revelation which he came to make, cannot even be pretended; unless it be maintained that an unfallen man could not make himself as audible and visible to us, as a fallen man. And still less, I should think, can it be supposed that to be fallen and sinful were necessary to endue him with, or indeed were capable of existing in communion with,—though that is strongly maintained,—that perfect purity which was necessary to him, both as Priest and a Sacrifice.

Hence, too, we see also what it is that constitutes at once the danger and the dignity of man. God has permitted a rebellion to be raised against his authority, that in the progress of putting it down, he

might give a manifestation of his perfections, which otherwise could not have been given. And *our* world is the field on which the powers of light and of darkness draw out their forces in hostile array: and in that awful conflict which so deeply engages and interests the attention of the whole universe, the post of danger and of glory,—the van of the battle is assigned to man. Everywhere is the contest carried on. The human heart is itself the principal scene of strife; and the soul of man is the victor's prize; and man himself is the chief gainer or sufferer by the result. Angels "go forth as ministering spirits to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation;" and doubtless delight to promote, as far as may be in their power, the work of our salvation. A thousand worlds require instruction as to the character of God; and it is through the medium of man that the instruction is conveyed. It is to the abode of men that angels go forth, both that they may learn their Maker's character, and perform their Maker's will. And cheering and animating as it is to know, that holy angels do go forth to our aid, and doubtless do render us essential support, though at present we can neither know the services that they do us, nor the means by which they do them; yet we cannot forget that they mingle, not as principals, but only as auxiliaries in the strife; that ours is the danger in the war, and ours is the gain of the victory.

And who is he who mustereth the armies of the Lord of Hosts? Who is the Captain of Salvation,

by whose strength they are made strong,—in whose might they are enabled to conquer? Who makes them to triumph over principalities and powers, over the rulers of the darkness of this world, over spiritual wickednesses in high places? Who is he who so fully accomplished, under circumstances of incalculably greater difficulty, that which the “first man” had failed to accomplish? Was he one who, at his coming into this world, was generated by the immediate act of God, not only liable to, but actually burdened with all the weight of that displeasure which God ever beareth against all that is sinful; and by God brought into personal union with that abominable thing which God hates? No. God calleth him, “Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,” “My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Can we suppose that he, in whose eyes the heavens are not clean, and before whom the angels veil their faces with their wings, while in lowly adoration they ascribe holiness to their Maker, would address, or could address such language as this to him who, like ourselves, was fallen and sinful; and who differed not, by however little, from us, in alienation and guiltiness? Could it be addressed to one who himself needed to be reconciled to God, before he could reconcile others? No. When man was made, Satan had come into the world, boasting that he had led principalities and powers into sin; and shall this creature of clay stand? And the easiness of his conquest, and the completeness of his dominion,

left for a time the wisdom and the power of God in doubt, and gave apparently abundant ground for the reflection, that man was a being who had been most unadvisably made ; and that such a being had been most unwisely placed within the reach of his assault, who had prevailed even upon angels to rebel. He had found one man who was made after the image of God, and in whom he had nothing, and he soon implanted sinfulness in him, and made him an easy prey. He is now compelled to meet, on the field of his own conquered and polluted world, the Second Man, coming in all the untainted sinlessness of the First Man, but surrounded with difficulties, and exposed to trials of which the First Man, had he retained his innocence, could have had no experience ; and yet so mightily upheld by the Godhead dwelling in him in all its fulness, that Satan and all his powers could find nothing in him, and could implant nothing in him, with which they might claim alliance, else most assuredly had he also become their prey. And when Satan had tried him, and had found nothing in him, then did he stir up his agents to plot his destruction ; not knowing that the death of Christ was the appointed means of his own destruction ;—that when Christ gave a life which he did not owe, and which no power could take from him, the life of a world dead in sin was restored ;—that when he entered voluntarily into the dominion of death, he entered there as a conqueror, and that dominion was for ever broken.

And if the events of any war are calculated to arouse our attention, and deeply to interest our feelings, surely much more is that war calculated to do so, where more than blood may be spilt, and more than empire may be lost or won. When our own countrymen are abroad in the field,—when the interests of our own country are at stake, with what anxious expectation are the news of every day waited for : and when they inform us that the hostile armies are approaching each other, with what palpitating eagerness are they read ! And when the day does come that brings their power to actual trial and decision, with what feelings do we read and re-read the minutest details, and dwell upon every incident, and find every thing, however trifling, possess a deep importance from its connection with such a scene ! They are our countrymen, our friends, our brothers, whom we view arranged on the ‘cloudy edge of battle ere it join,’ and who, under our eye, are passing into the fatal contest. We hear from afar ‘the thunder of the captains and the shouting.’ We place ourselves side by side with the warrior, as he advances to the shock where, point to point, and man to man, the embattled squadrons close in deadly strife ; and while life and death hang in dreadful suspense, our feelings are just the warrior’s own, and our very nostrils become expanded with the intensity of a sensation that hardly permits us to breathe, and every pulsation of our heart bounds in perfect unison with the boundings of his. It is useless at such a



moment to enter into a discussion of the goodness or badness of the cause contested, or to philosophize on the manifold crimes and atrocities of war. When we have imbibed the very spirit of the warrior, when we are glorying, exulting in the view, in the very feeling of an energy which no toils can weary, of an ardour which no difficulties can abate, of a courage which the multiplication of dangers only arouses into a deeper intensity of daring ; at such a moment the coldness of our moral calculations is melted away ; the voice of reason and of philosophy is drowned ; the ‘ raptures of the strife,’ are all our own ; and to no voice can we listen, till ‘ the earthquake voice of victory ’ bursts upon our ear. I ask not if this be a Christian or a righteous feeling. I am merely stating a fact of which every man must be conscious, that on such an occasion such are our feelings. Nor is the art of the poet or of the orator requisite to awaken them. The interest lies in the facts themselves, and the dry details of a despatch, or the prosaic insipidity of a gazette, has doubtless often been read with an intensity of interest which the most animated poetry never excited.

But while there are few who do not, in some degree experience these feelings, there are many who are totally dead and insensible to the feelings that should naturally be awakened by a much more important and eventful war,—that moral and spiritual war which is carried on around us and within us, where more than mortal powers are opposed, and

more than mortal interests are at stake. But whatever we may be, the angels who have become acquainted with the character of God, through the work of man's redemption, are not insensible to the progress of that work. They surround the throne of the Most High, with golden harps in their hands; and the events which awaken these harps to heavenly harmony, and pour from their strings that melody to which God condescends to listen, and which mortal ear may never hear, are just the triumphs of "the redeemed of the Lord" over the influence of that "other lord" who has had dominion over them; and whose chains they have been enabled to burst, through the power of him, who, amidst all the weakness of human flesh, and under all the weight of the guilt of a lost world, and all the deadliest efforts of Satan's power, never fell, and never sinned, and never felt one unholy desire or emotion. "And the spirits of the just made perfect," clothed in the spotless robe of a Redeemer's righteousness, feel it their glorious privilege to tell how they have manifested the glories of the Lord, by the toils which they have been enable to sustain in fighting the good fight,—by the hardness which, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, they have been strengthened to endure,—and by the resistless energy which they derived from the consciousness that when "Christ was formed in them the hope of glory," their hearts were enriched not only with an uncorrupted, but with an incorruptible seed,—a principle which Satan could not

subvert, nor death itself destroy. And can we hope to participate in their raptures, and to unite with them in singing the song of triumph, and of praise to him who was slain, and who redeemed us out of every kindred, and tongue, and tribe, and nation, if we can contemplate the progress of the mighty warfare that is going on between the powers of light and of darkness, with the most perfect apathy, as if we had no personal concern in the matter: and while we have an ear open to the most trivial news of the day, have neither an ear to hear, nor a heart to be interested in the events of this mighty war; but listen to any mention of it, as if it were a matter of less importance than the savage encounters of ferocious hordes of barbarians on the banks of the Danube or the shores of the Euxine?

On this subject I have only another remark to make: It is this; that for man no middle fate is prepared, but happiness or misery in the extreme must be his. The selected instruments of carrying on that war which God condescends to wage with those that have rebelled against him; the weak vessels of clay chosen by him to confound the mighty, through the power of him who was incarnate, for the purpose of securing even to us worms of the dust the victory, and of humbling the pride of apostate angels, by making even us their conquerors;—if, wearied with the toils of the warfare; or insensible to the glory of the victory, we desert to the enemy, and continue his willing and unresisting slaves, then

do we sink into condemnation under the weight of a criminality which even fallen angels could not contract ; for they at least have never treated the offered mercy of God with contempt. And well may they wonder to see in the human heart a blindness, a perversity, a madness, which can despise even the offered friendship of God, and all the glories of heaven. And on the other hand, they who, through faith in Christ, enter into the kingdom of heaven, enter there the admiration of angels, purchased with a price which for the fallen portion of their own order was never paid, and rescued out of dangers to which they themselves were never exposed ; and therefore do they glorify God in his saints, and admire him in all them that believe.

Human nature is at this moment the highest of created natures, and more intimately united to the Godhead than any other ; and where our head is, there shall all his members, in due time, be. Let me entreat the reader then to recollect that in a few short years he shall occupy that place to which angels may look up with admiration ; or else that on which devils may look down with the conviction, that they have been less guilty. Christ came to save not fallen angels, but fallen man : and higher than heaven is the portion of him whom the Sovereign of the universe became man, and shed his blood to redeem ; and lower than hell must be the fate of him, who, even at such a price, refused to be redeemed. How powerfully ought this awful, yet animating considera-

tion to arouse us to hasten our escape from “the wrath that is to come,” and to “resist even unto blood, striving against sin !” How powerfully does it enforce the admonition of the Apostle, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord !”

To the texts of Scripture now quoted and commented upon, many more might be added were it at all necessary. But if those already produced be not sufficient to shew that the human nature of Christ was not fallen and sinful, I must consider the attempt to establish this, or any point, on the authority of Scripture, to be desperate.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE PHRASE, 'FALLEN NATURE.'

I MUST now call the attention of the reader to a different view of the subject. In the course of this controversy I have repeatedly had occasion to observe that human *nature* never fell. I have never entered into any discussion in proof of this remark, because I took it for granted that the remark need only to be made, in order to be at once admitted. That this has been the case in some instances, I have no doubt ; but I have no reason to suppose that there are not still some who cling to the phrase, and therefore a few remarks seem to be called for. The expression, *fallen nature*, is in common use for the purpose of expressing the universality of human corruption ; but nothing can be more absurd than to reason upon the phrase, as if it were expressive of a metaphysical fact. *Nature* is not an accident which may or may not be present in a being, but is the very essence of the being whose nature it is. It can therefore be produced by the direct act of God alone. It is capable of only two affections. It may be

generated, and it may be destroyed. It admits of no alteration; for when we speak of *nature*, alteration and destruction are perfectly synonymous terms. If a being were changed into a being of a different *nature*, it is clear that one nature would be destroyed and another generated. They who profess to be familiar with Greek philosophy, should be familiar also with all that can be said with regard to these sentiments; and they who can bring but a small portion of patient thinking to the subject, need not be indebted to either Greek philosophers or Christian fathers for information of so very simple a character. Now it is clear that if *nature* cannot be the result of accident, but can proceed from the immediate act of God alone, then the fall of man could not affect his *nature* in the least. If the *nature* of man fell when man himself fell, some very singular results must follow. A few of them I shall notice.

If, when man fell, his *nature* was changed, then it follows of plain necessity, either that he was not man before the fall, or he was not man after it. Man may subsist in an endless variety of situations—may suffer and enjoy an endless variety of pains and of pleasures, and still be man. But change his *nature*, and he is man no longer. The most untutored savage that roams his native wilds, hardly to be distinguished from the beasts that he makes his prey, is a man; and as certainly and as completely a man as the most exalted genius that ever extended the bounds of human knowledge, or did honour to human reason. They

are as widely different as two beings well can be ; but they are inseparably united by the bonds of a common nature. The one cannot sink below it, nor can the other rise above it. In all things else they may differ ; but through whatever changes they may pass in this world, or in that which is to come, they are alike *men*. Now Adam is distinctly called man *before* he fell ; and he is no less distinctly called man *after* that event. I am therefore compelled to infer that though his fall was so fearfully fatal and destructive, yet it affected not his *nature* at all. Indeed if moral excellence or delinquency could alter the *nature*, then so far would the common axiom, that *nature* is the same in all, be from being true, that we must rather say, that there are not two men whose *nature* is the same.

Again, we are fallen creatures, and in consequence of our fall, are suffering creatures. But if our *nature* be fallen, then how are our sufferings to be accounted for ? We are in a fallen condition : if our *nature* also be fallen, then our nature and our condition are perfectly congenial to one another, and suffering in this case is impossible. It is a law that pervades the whole universe, and applies to all the works of God whether material or spiritual, whether animate or inanimate, that the presence of some good is essential to the existence of suffering. Take away from any thing whatever all that is good in it, and you at the same time completely divest it of the very capacity of suffering. Look, for example, to a piece of wood in

a state of decay ; as long as any portion of it remains sound, that portion resists the progress of the corruption ; and in having that resistance overcome by the superior power of the corruption, it suffers ; while the part already decayed, already fully possessed by the corruption, offering no further resistance, suffers not. The same remark applies to our own bodies. An inflamed limb suffers intense pain ; but when mortification has taken place, when there is no longer any sound flesh to resist the progress of corruption, the pain ceases ; and the whole of the portion in which the corruption has completed its operation, has lost all capability of suffering. In both these cases it is clear, that when the *nature* of the objects operated upon by corruption, has been changed by means of that corruption, all capacity for suffering is completely extinguished.

The same law extends to our souls. Extinguish all that is good in them, and you at the same time effectually extinguish the possibility of suffering. The hardened sinner obtains a short and deceitful repose, by the suppression, as far as he can, of every moral feeling. His repose will terminate by awakening in him the ceaseless undying feeling, the suppression of which constitutes his repose, that he is a man. When Colonel Gardiner groaned out in anguish,—‘ Oh, that I were that dog ! ’ had he been able to accomplish his wish,—to divest himself of the nature of a man and assume that of a dog, every one sees that the anguish which dictated the wish would have

instantaneously ceased ; and he would have enjoyed his career of licentiousness without a check. It is evident that there was still something good in him ; and that the existence of that good was just what caused his anguish. Could he have got completely rid of that good, he would at the same time have got rid of his sufferings. But *nature* would not change at his bidding, and therefore he found no rest till he found it there where alone the author of nature has placed it, in Christ Jesus. In the same way, when Satan said, "evil, be thou my good," every one sees that, could he have realized his resolution, and have made evil to be really his good, his sufferings would instantly have ceased. But that he is totally incapable of doing. He is a fallen angel ; but, unhappily for him, he is still an angel, and therefore a sufferer. He cannot change that *nature* which obeys the power of him alone by whom it was produced. He cannot contract himself within its limits, so as to escape any portion of the sufferings which an angel is capable of enduring ; neither can he go beyond these limits, so as to rise superior to these sufferings. *Nature*, an unalterable nature, forms the indisruptible chain which binds him down to the rack. Change his *nature*, make it a fallen nature suitable to his fallen condition, and you break his chain, and extinguish his sufferings.

It is evident then, that in fallen angels, and in fallen men, there still remains something good ; something which, unaffected by the fall, renders them



sensible to all its sufferings. And what is good in either, but that *nature* which God created good, and which no accident, and no power can alter? In us fallen creatures its every operation is obstructed, impeded, opposed. It is doomed by the misery of our fallen condition to hold ceaseless converse with all that is most abhorrent to it. And in the course of our renovation, during the process of extinguishing that law implanted in our flesh which holds nature a prisoner, and of setting the captive free, and restoring it to the unimpeded exercise of all its native powers, how deep is the sorrow that it awakens on every instance of the prevalence of unsubdued corruption? and how delightful the feeling on every instance of its free and unfettered movement toward the great Father of our Spirits? The corruption that we derive from a fallen progenitor forms no part of human nature, as the sufferings which it inflicts upon us abundantly testify. Human nature existed in Adam before he fell. It exists in us, his fallen children now. It exists in the redeemed of the Lord, who enjoy all the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. It exists in those who are driven away in their wickedness, and have no longer room to hope. From the height of heaven to the depth of hell, men exist in an endless variety of the most opposite conditions; but in all these conditions still they are men, and their nature unalterably human.

From all this, two conclusions appear to be clearly deducible. The one is that if the Eternal Word, in

becoming man, took a fallen nature, he took not our nature which is not, nor by any possibility could be, fallen. The other is that if he took a fallen nature, then there is no accounting for his sufferings. He placed himself in that situation into which man had brought himself by sin. He sustained all the penal effects of the fall. But if he had a fallen nature, these effects were wholly agreeable to that nature, and must have been productive of enjoyment rather than suffering. On the contrary, it appears to me, that his sufferings possessed an intensity which we cannot fully estimate, just because he possessed, even in his humanity, a purity and holiness of which we can form no estimate. His nature was exactly the same as ours. But in us the operations of that nature are obstructed and perverted. We can live strangers to God, and cut off from all communion with him, and never feel it. His countenance may not shine upon us, and yet we may not mourn for, nor be sensible of the misery of such a separation from the fountain of all good. We can lie under the burden of a thousand sins, and yet be at perfect ease. But in Christ the human nature was not obstructed and perverted in its operations, by that law of the flesh which dwells in fallen man, for he took not a human person, but only a human nature; and therefore when he was tried by the contradiction of sinners against himself, and had the guilt of our iniquities laid upon him, and the sensible tokens of his Father's presence withdrawn from him, he must have ex-

perienced an anguish of which, at least till our nature be delivered from the bondage of corruption, we can form no adequate conception.

I observe farther, that if human nature be fallen, then the fundamental principle of Manichæus is an undeniable truth. That heresiarch,—we must call him so, because he called himself an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ,—maintained, as is well known, that there were two Creators; the one good, from whom every good nature had its origin; the other evil, from whom every evil nature had its origin. His grand argument in support of his doctrine, put in its simplest form, was this. An evil nature cannot by any possibility proceed from a good creator. There must of necessity therefore be an evil creator from whom every evil nature had its origin. He appears to have been a confused and feeble writer, incapable either of profound thinking, or close reasoning. He, like many of his predecessors, no doubt found it extremely difficult to account for the origin of evil. He was not sufficiently simple to suppose that after God had created a nature one thing, it could by the fall, or by any accident whatever, become another thing. He saw clearly enough that nature is not an accident, and cannot be accidentally produced. He cut the knot therefore which he could not untie; and determined that there must be an evil creator, since there are evil natures, whose existence can no otherwise be accounted for. Now grant him his fact, that there are evil natures, and

his reasoning is incontrovertible; for an evil nature of necessity infers an evil creator. He was attacked by Augustine, who understood the matter well, having once been a zealous Manichæan himself, and was well acquainted with both the strong and the weak points of the system.<sup>1</sup> He assails him upon the fact, and strongly maintains, and, if I be any judge of reasoning, decisively proves, that there is not, never was, nor by any possibility can be any such thing as an evil *nature*,—that every nature, as far as it is a nature, is good. It is only a slight specimen of Augustine's reasoning that I can here introduce. It is however essentially necessary, to shew his sentiments upon the subject, in his own language.

In one place he thus speaks,—‘Whence any one who has eyes may see that every nature, in as far as it is a nature, is a good thing: because from one and the same thing, in which I find something to praise, and Manichæus something to blame, if those things which are good be taken away, there will be no nature; but if those things which displease be taken away, the uncorrupted nature will remain. Take from water that it be not muddy and turbid, and pure and tranquil water will remain: take from water the concord of its parts, and it will be water no longer. If then that which is evil being taken away, the nature remains more pure; but that which is good being taken away, there remains no nature there; that

<sup>1</sup> See note I. Appendix.

which is good forms the nature, while that which is evil is not nature, but contrary to nature." <sup>1</sup> He proceeds at much greater length than I can here quote, to establish and illustrate his position, that every *nature* is good, that in every thing that, and that alone, which is good in it constitutes the *nature*, and that which is evil in it is contrary to its *nature*.

In another treatise he shews that all good may be referred to *mode*, *species*, and *order*, which three things are from God. After illustrating this at some length, he says,—“Where these three are great, the good is great; where they are small, the good is small; where they are not, there is no good. And again, where these three are great, the natures are great; where these three are small, the natures are

<sup>1</sup> Ex quo jam videt, qui potest videre, omnem naturam, in quantum natura est, bonum esse: quia ex una eademque re, in qua et ego quod laudarem, et ille quod vituperaret invenit, si tollantur ea quæ bona sunt, nulla natura erit; si autem tollantur ea quæ displicent, in corrupta natura remanebit. Tolle de aquis ut non sint cænosæ et turbidæ, remanet aquæ puræ et tranquillæ: tolle de aquis partium concordiam, non erunt aquæ. Si ergo malo illo adempto manet natura purgatior, bono autem detracto non manet ulla natura; hoc ibi facit naturam quod bonum habet; quod autem malum, non natura, sed contra naturam est. *Contra Epistolam Manichæi, Cap. 33.* The instance of water here introduced may appear not to be the happiest that might have been chosen; but Augustine was led to adopt it because Manichæus in his *Fundamenti*, the epistle against which Augustine is here writing, makes turbid and muddy water one of the worlds in his *terra tenebrarum*. This is followed up by referring, for the same reason, to the *wind*, where he remarks that though a hurricane be bad, yet that is not essential to wind, which may blow a soft and gentle breeze. You may therefore have wind without that which is evil in it; but take away that similitude of parts which makes the wind a body, and you have no nature at all.



small ; where they are not, there is no nature. Every nature therefore is good."<sup>1</sup>

From the testimony of Augustine then, we learn that to maintain the existence of an *evil nature*, is to maintain the fundamental principle of Manichæism. To say that the nature was at first created good, but became evil by the fall, only makes the matter worse. And they who teach that our Lord took a fallen nature must be labouring under some strange delusion if they deny that they are teaching the very doctrine upon which Manichæism is built, as clearly as ever Manichæus taught it.

The danger is not in the slightest degree avoided, by rejecting the expression *fallen nature*, and teaching that Christ took not a *fallen nature*, but nature in a *fallen state*. The one expression is quite equivalent to the other, for unless nature could be fallen, it never could be in a fallen state. We might just as well say that that which could never die, was nevertheless found in a dead state ; and that which could never live, was found in a living state ; and that which could never rise, was found in a risen state ; as say that that which could never fall, was found in a fallen state. If then nature was in a fallen state,

<sup>1</sup> Hæc tria ubi magna sunt, magna bona sunt ; ubi parva sunt, parva bona sunt ; ubi nulla sunt, nullum bonum est. Et rursus, ubi hæc tria magna sunt, magnæ naturæ sunt ; ubi parva sunt, parvæ naturæ sunt ; ubi nulla sunt, nulla natura est. Omnis ergo natura bona est. *De Natura Boni*, Cap. 3. The whole of this treatise, as well as the one last quoted, will richly repay a careful perusal. Augustine also explains his sentiments upon this subject very fully in his answers to Julian, who charged him with Manichæism for maintaining the doctrine of original sin.

nature fell; and consequently Manichæism is true, and Christianity is to be abandoned. This consequence there is no possibility of evading; and were it not that the tenet has been maintained by those who profess to be intimately acquainted with the writings of Augustine, it might have been hoped, that in the face of a consequence so decisively ruinous, even the most zealous assertors that our Lord took a fallen sinful nature would pause in their fatal career, and admit that they were labouring under a fearful mistake when they maintained the existence of such a thing as a fallen nature, or a nature in a fallen state.

If then a nature could be fallen, and if it be true that at the fall of man human *nature* fell, then it is clear that Adam could not be a man both before and after the change that took place in his *nature*,—that the fall could have produced no suffering,—and that Manichæus must be owned as that which he declares himself to be, an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, even if it were admitted, in defiance of all these consequences, that a *nature* may be fallen, I see not what advantage could be derived from the admission, to the cause of those who maintain that our Lord took fallen human nature, or human nature in a fallen state. For nature cannot exist excepting in a person. It floats not an invisible and infectious thing, like the *malaria* of a Campanian bog or a Batavian fen, ready to seize upon all who may come within the sphere of its activity. If a fallen *nature*

exist at all, it can exist only as the nature of a fallen *person*. If then there was a fallen *nature*, or a *nature* in a fallen state existing in Christ, the conclusion is inevitable, that there was a fallen person in him ; and consequently that either the humanity was a *person*, or the second person of the Holy Trinity was *fallen*. In every point of view therefore in which the question as to a *fallen nature* can be placed, it appears to me clear as the light of day, that he who persists in saying that our Lord took a fallen human nature, or human nature in a fallen state, has just to choose whether he will preach the impiety of a fallen God, or the heresy of a distinct human personality, in the one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

Few persons can estimate more lowly than I do, the value of metaphysical discussions, in settling a theological question. When I first wrote upon this subject therefore, I contented myself with merely stating the absurdity of saying that human nature, or any *nature*, ever fell, or sinned, or died. To a few who are capable of thinking, and who therefore needed only to have their attention called to the fact, I have reason to believe, that the simple statement of the matter was perfectly sufficient. To those who still hesitate, the above reasoning may probably prove satisfactory : and perhaps there may be some with whom the authority of Augustine will have more weight than any arguments. They who are willing to be guided by human authority cannot well choose

a safer guide. Such speculations I do not willingly introduce. The garden of the Lord is before us, rich in all the fruits that can strengthen the soul, and gladden the heart of man ; and I know not why we should leave that garden, and go to gather figs from the thistles, and grapes from the thorns of metaphysical disquisition. But if we must leave this region of light, to grope after the few scattered rays that may happen to be met with amidst the gloom of metaphysics ;—if we must be sent *inter silvas Academi quærere verum* ; it is surely no unreasonable demand to insist, that metaphysics shall keep some terms with common sense,—shall not at every step outrage our simplest perceptions, and trample on our best established principles, and compel us, in defiance of all Scripture, and all reason, and all authority, to believe that the very corner stone of Manichæism is a profound and fundamental Gospel truth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

THE following Sermon, with which I conclude this part of my work, takes up one of the most important and interesting points of discussion that arise out of the doctrine of Incarnation. But in order to render the bearing of the Sermon, and the importance of the doctrine which it contains more distinctly seen, it will be proper first to notice a line of argument which has often been pursued. That line of argument owes its origin I believe to Lactantius, at least he is the earliest writer in whom I recollect to have met it ; and has often been urged by Socinians, and is much relied upon by the supporters of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity. The nature of the argument will be sufficiently understood by the following extract from Lactantius. In stating the necessity of the Incarnation, he teaches that it was necessary that Christ should be man, that he might not only give laws, but by his own obedience might exemplify them. In the course of illustrating this view which he does at considerable



length, he says,—‘ Therefore that he—the teacher of laws namely—may be perfect, there must be nothing that the disciple may be able to object to him ; so that if the disciple should say,—You command impossible things ; he may reply,—See, I do them myself. But I am clothed with flesh, whose property it is to sin. And I have the same flesh, yet sin rules not in me. It is difficult for me to despise worldly goods, because without them one cannot live in this body. See, I have also a body, and yet I fight against all cupidity. I cannot endure pain and death for righteousness’ sake, for I am frail. See, pain and death have power upon me, and I conquer those very things which you fear, that I may make you a conqueror over pain and death. I go first through those things which you pretend cannot be endured. If you cannot follow me commanding you, follow me going before you. In this manner every excuse is taken away.’<sup>1</sup> By this means no doubt all excuse is taken away ; but then it is very clear that at the same time all pretence to divinity in Christ is also taken away ; and his sin-

<sup>1</sup> Ergo ut perfectus esse possit, nihil ei debet opponi ab eo qui docendus est ; ut si forte dixerit, impossibilia præcipis ; respondeat, ecce ipse facio. At ego carne indutus sum, cujus est peccare proprium. Et ego eandem carnem gero ; et tamen peccatum in me non dominatur. Mihi opes contemnere difficile est, quia vivi aliter non potest in hoc corpore. Ecce et mihi corpus est, et tamen pugno contra omnem cupiditatem. Non possum pro justitia nec dolorem ferre nec mortem, quia fragilis sum. Ecce et in me dolor, ac mors habet potestatem ; et ea ipsa, quæ times, vinco ; ut victorem te faciam doloris ac mortis. Prior vado per ea, quæ sustineri non posse prætendis ; si præcipientem sequi non potes, sequere antecedentem. Sublata est hoc modo omnis excusatio. *Institutiones*, Lib. iv. cap. 24.

fulness is effectually established. For if he be a divine person, then this places him at an immeasurable distance from his disciple. And if the disciple can say, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members," then the principle upon which Lactantius reasons, is completely subverted, unless the Saviour can say the same. And if he can say, I have to contend with all the spiritual deadness, and all the moral weakness, resulting not only from original sin, but from long and deeply rooted habits of actual guilt; what becomes of this principle, unless the Saviour can say the same? And thus not only is the divinity of Christ denied, but he is made a sinner equal at least to the very chief of sinners.

It is true that Lactantius had no design whatever to establish these consequences, for he neither doubted the divinity of Christ, nor believed in the sinfulness of his flesh, as we shall see in the proper place. But if his principle be correct, these consequences inevitably follow. The reader therefore will not wonder that Lactantius should be a favourite with Socinian writers. Doctor Priestly says, 'I cannot help laying particular stress on the omission of it,—the doctrine of atonement, namely,—by Lactantius, who treats professedly of the system of Christianity, as it was generally received in his days. Yet in his *Divine Institutions*, there is so far from being any mention of the necessity of the death of Christ to

atone for the sins of men, that he treats of the nature of sin, of the mercy of God, and of the efficacy of repentance, as if he had never heard of any such doctrine.’<sup>1</sup> But the doctor has neglected to mention some circumstances which must necessarily be taken into consideration, in order to enable us to determine what *stress* is to be laid upon either the omission or the expression of any doctrine by Lactantius. Nor can I here enter into any minute statement of these circumstances ; but some of them must be mentioned. Lactantius was a layman, a professor of rhetoric, and more anxious by far to emulate the polished elegance of Cicero than the Christian knowledge and energy of Paul. And he had his reward. That his writings have still a place in our theological libraries, is a distinction for which they are indebted not to the theological information which they contain, but to the unrivalled beauty of their style. In the earlier Books of his *Institutions*, where he assails the follies of the heathens, and where he was master of his subject, he is indeed well worthy to be read. But when he comes to state the doctrines of Christianity, we can only wonder that any man who had ever read the Bible, however carelessly, could contrive to know so little about the matter. Jerome very justly remarked of him that he was much better fitted to overturn heathenism than to build up Christianity. His usual way of proving a doctrine is by giving one quotation from Hermes Trismegistus, another from

<sup>1</sup> History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Vol. I. p. 209.

the Bible, and a third from the sybilline verses in the inspiration of which he expressly avows his belief.

It is perfectly true, that in treating of the death of Christ, he never once mentions the pardon of our sins as one of the reasons of it ; nor writes a single sentence from which it can be inferred that he had ever heard of such a writer as Paul having treated of the subject before him. But when Priestley stated this fact, it would have been but fair to state also the reasons which he does assign for our Lord's death. He makes every circumstance attending it typical. For example, the gall and vinegar signified the bitterness and sorrow to be endured by his followers ; and the crown of thorns meant that he would surround himself with a multitude of people taken from among the wicked ; for a multitude standing in a ring is called a crown,—*Corona enim dicetur circumstans in orbem populus*,—and thorns represent the wicked from among whom he would collect this crown of people. But amidst all his sufferings his bones were not broken, but his body was kept entire, lest it should unfit for rising again,—*inhabile ad resurgendum* ! Now if such *stress* is laid upon his authority, that his omission of a doctrine is a good reason for rejecting that doctrine, I conceive that his express assertion of a doctrine is a still better reason for adopting it. As far then as his authority goes, if we reject the atonement because he makes no mention of it, we are bound, in consistency, to adopt that

typical view of the sufferings of Christ, because he expressly asserts it. For it is surely absurd to say that we will treat such notions with utter contempt, even though supported by all the weight which the authority of Lactantius can give ; while yet we feel such high respect for that authority, that we will deny the doctrine of atonement merely because he says nothing about it.

That he said nothing about that doctrine because he knew nothing about it, is, I think, abundantly evident ; because, in a different part of his work, he teaches that the remission of our sins may be purchased by alms-giving ;—nay, and teaches too that we may carry our alms deeds to an extent beyond what is necessary for that purpose ; for he advises that when a man has purchased the forgiveness of all his sins, he should not then cease to give, but should still give for the praise and glory of virtue !<sup>1</sup> Are they who reject the atonement on the ground that Lactantius says nothing about it, prepared to shew their respect for his authority by adopting this doctrine ? If not, they should say nothing about the authority of that writer, since it plainly appears that they would just as stedfastly have renounced the atonement as they do, even though Lactantius had taught it as clearly as the Bible does.

The line of argument which Lactantius incautiously adopted, without seeing its consequences, goes also

<sup>1</sup> Ut quod ante in medelam vulnerum fecerat, post modum faciat in laudem gloriamque virtutis. *Lib.* 6, *Cap.* 13.



very directly, as I have observed above, to establish the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh,—nay, to make him guilty of both original and actual sin. For if he were not guilty of both, then it is useless for us to go to the sinner and urge upon him the duty of obedience from the example of Christ; because he will at once reply, that if Christ was not involved in all the guilt of original and actual sin, then his obedience was yielded under circumstances which unfitted it for affording any argument, that obedience either would be required, or could be yielded by those who are loaded with all the weight of both original and actual sin. And Lactantius, and all who adopt his principles, must admit these fearful consequences, or they must renounce the principle itself. For if they should say that he had no sin, either original or actual, then the sinner would at once say,—‘ If the doctrine which you teach be true, I can derive no hope from Christ. For you tell me that if he differed from me by however little, he can be no Saviour of mine; and you tell me at the same time that he did differ from me most widely, by wanting the most prominent characteristics of my present state, original and actual sin. Where is then my hope? He could conquer the devil, he could overcome the world, and he could constrain, and only by a perpetual and fearful struggle constrain to unwilling obedience, flesh that was never contaminated by sin either original or actual. But does this afford me any hope that he can form my flesh to obedience also, which

is deeply tainted with both? He could keep sin out of sinless flesh; but how do I know that he can drive it out of flesh of which it has full possession? He could keep pure humanity from falling into sin; but can he lift fallen humanity out of the guilt and impurity which by many sins it hath contracted? If with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost, he 'all but yielded,' how can I possibly hope that a smaller measure of the Holy Ghost is capable of doing for me, what all his fulness had just enough to do to accomplish for him, under much more favourable circumstances? In short, if the principle of Lactantius be true, then we can derive no encouragement from the example of Christ, and no hope that he can make us conquerors over *all* our foes, unless he engaged them under all our disadvantages, and had the same original depravity, the same weight of actual guilt, and the same force of habitual transgression to meet, with which we have to contend. This result, I think, is a very satisfactory proof of the fatal nature of the principle from which it so directly springs. The following sermon contains a sound, and clear, and able view of the certainty with which we may rely upon the sympathy of Christ in all our trials and temptations, and of the confidence with which we may depend upon his power to deliver us, without any necessity for supposing him to be fallen and sinful, or for resorting to a principle so fatal as that originating with Lactantius, and unhappily so often adopted since.

The Sermon is the production of a friend, whose name I regret that I am not permitted to give with it. It was addressed to his own parishioners in the ordinary course of his ministrations, without the remotest idea that it would ever receive a wider publicity than he gave it from the pulpit. It was by mere accident that I heard of his having preached upon the text; and having an opportunity of seeing him soon after, I asked him for the sermon. He very readily replied, that if I could make any use of it, I was perfectly welcome to it. He had no idea that I would print it; nor had I, at the time, any such design. But on reading it, I concluded at once that the very best use I could make of it was to give it entire. To this he has not objected, and I have therefore sent it to the press as I received it, without the alteration of a single word. I make this statement as a piece of justice to the author, and by no means as an apology for the sermon, for which I think that the reader will agree with me that it has no occasion. At least, had I conceived that it, in the slightest degree, needed an apology, it should not have been here. The ministers of our church have of late been represented as all that is careless and all that is ignorant. When the reader has perused this discourse, and recollects that it was never intended for the press, nor is sent there as being at all superior to any other of the discourses which its author is weekly in the habit of addressing to his people; and is compared with the more laboured, and more

carefully prepared productions of some of those who are so loud in their censure of the Scottish Clergy, he will probably think that these immoderate censures might very well have been spared, and that of the people who are constantly accustomed to such discourses, there is no reason to complain that the word of life is not rightly divided to them.

## A SERMON.

HEBREWS IV. 15.

FOR WE HAVE NOT AN HIGH PRIEST WHICH CANNOT BE TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITY ; BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN.

IN these words, the first thing that strikes us is the assertion of a fact respecting our Lord Jesus Christ, in his character of our high priest—that he is “ touched with the feeling of our infirmity.” Next this fact is traced to its origin—the natural cause of its existence is assigned—we are informed how it came to pass that he is so touched—he “ was in all points tempted like as we are.” Being, though divine, yet possessed of a real and true humanity, it is easy for men, by consulting their familiar experience, to perceive clearly the connection betwixt this cause and this consequence in his gracious soul. He is the grand exemplification—the noblest practical exhibition—of that standing maxim, that by being ourselves intimate with grief, we learn to succour the wretched ;—as, if he had never tasted



pain, we could hardly have been prevented from applying to him more than to any other, the reverse of that maxim, which is of equal authority,—that those can never enter fully into our sorrow, who have felt nothing like it themselves. This reference of the inspired writer to a well-known law of our nature gives additional clearness and force to that delightful truth which is besides so plainly expressed in the former clause of the text, viz. : that the compassion of Christ for our afflictions is not the result of a merely rational conjecture or estimate of their severity, founded on observation of their natural symptoms or effects, as one who has never known ill health may judge of the violence of another man's fever:—but that it proceeds from that quick, tender, penetrating, thorough sense of our trials, which *perfect manhood* could not fail to acquire, by experiencing personally, as tests of his own obedience, the keenness of bodily pain, and the anguish of a wounded spirit. The *extent* also to which the sympathy of our Saviour spreads, is illustrated by this mention of its origin. He was tempted “in all points,” like as we are; therefore “in all points” we may surely reckon upon finding in him this fellow-feeling. It was not a few kinds only of our earthly struggles, apart from others, that he admitted into his heart, so that he could appreciate *them* by feeling as well as judgment, and not the rest: but he stood successively in all the main flood-gates of tribulation, and there made trial of the worst that mortal man can endure, whether from the

hostility of a disordered world, or from the rage of fallen angels, or from the wrath of offended heaven. Yet it was with a certain modification that he was so tempted :—it was “ without sin.” This is the only difference which the inspired writer marks—the only reservation which he is careful to make. But then it is a reservation of so much consequence, that in the eye of our guilty apprehension, it seems at first sight to take back nearly all that had been previously granted ; and to make so essential a dissimilarity betwixt the temptations of the high priest and those of his people, that the matter of chief importance in the case,—the sympathy on his part—is almost wholly deprived of its foundation. To beings who see that very many of their temptations are the effects of previous sin, failing which, they had never existed ; and against whom temptation is so often prevalent, that the very *name* no longer presents so readily the idea of simple trial, as of trial inducing crime, this is a very natural prejudice ; yet to beings entirely dependent, and that through faith, upon the tender mercies of Christ Jesus, it is a prejudice so fatal, that a little time can scarcely be better employed than in endeavouring to see upon what weak foundations it rests, or rather how utterly it is unfounded. May the Spirit of wisdom and grace vouchsafe, in this exercise, not only to disentangle our minds from all misunderstandings, but so to commend his truth to our assured convictions, as to fill our hearts with sacred encouragement and comfort !

In illustrating the text by the current usage and clear authority of other Scriptures if we can make it appear,

That *temptation* and *sin*, however closely related, are yet things entirely and essentially distinct, so that there may be real and true temptation, where there is no sin whatever ;—this in the first place.

And if we can farther shew, That those temptations which are the most sifting, severe, and terrible in their nature, may be precisely those which are the farthest removed from being sinful :—this in the second place.

Then, thirdly, we shall the more readily see, how the temptations of Christ, notwithstanding their sinlessness, were such as to give him a most thorough experience and feeling of human infirmity in the hour of trial :—

And, lastly, how this feeling on the part of Christ amounts to a true and perfect sympathy with the infirmities of all who receive Him as their High Priest, under every form and aspect of their temptations.

I. Let us advert then, in the first place, to the truth, That both in the nature of the things themselves, and in the language of the inspired writers, *temptation* and *sin* are entirely distinct and separate matters. We do not say that temptation and sin are not intimately *connected* :—we only say that they are not *identified*. Our assertion is not that they have nothing to do with each other ; but just that they are

not one and the same thing. That temptation is often mingled with sin, as wine is often mingled with water, must be admitted : but as wine and water are very different substances, and, though capable of mixture, yet can and do exist in a separate state, so it is also with sin and temptation. To say that there is ever sin without temptation leading to it, might indeed be false ; and if true, would have no connection whatever with our subject : but *there may be temptation that neither partakes of sin, nor produces it*:—and that is precisely the assertion of the text concerning the temptation of our Lord. If we attentively look at the plainest facts, this truth must speedily be apparent. How many are successfully tempted by *hunger* or the dread of it, to seek subsistence by unrighteous practices ? Yet surely to be hungry and to dread the pangs of hunger, are but mere infirmities, not sins. How many crimes are committed under the influence of anger ! Yet there is such a thing as blameless anger, if the dictates of God's Spirit are of any authority ; for were anger always criminal, the apostolic precept, “ Be angry and sin not,” would just be an injunction upon us to sin without sinning. The truth is, that all the stronger appetites and affections which God has implanted in our nature, and which would have been necessary to its being and well being, though we had never fallen—affections most fit, most becoming, most beneficial, most indispensable—are every one of them converted into most dangerous temptations, when

they happen at any time to be powerfully excited, under circumstances that preclude them from being lawfully indulged. There may, no doubt, be excitement without just cause,—or excitement that goes beyond due bounds,—and then certainly it is sinful excitement ;—and if it lead to criminal conduct, here without question, is a sinful temptation producing sinful deeds. But on the other hand, the excitement *may* be quite unavoidable as to its occasion,—and quite reasonable as to its degree ; whilst it may, notwithstanding, continue to be a *temptation* of the most powerful kind. If, for instance, a man is long shut out from every kind of nourishment, he cannot but hunger and thirst. If the privation is continued, no feeling can be more reasonable than the fear of death, as none can be more violent. In these circumstances, should he suddenly find an opportunity of supplying his urgent want, but only through some act of decided wickedness, who can fail to see that he would be fiercely tempted to seek the relief by committing the sin ? Should he in fact commit it, he is guilty ; but his guilt lies not in the temptation itself surely, but in the success of the temptation. It lies not in having felt the raging appetite, but in having yielded to it ;—not in having feared the death of the body, but in having forgotten the fear of Him who, after the body is dead, can cast the soul into hell. That no part of the sin belonged to the mere temptation, will however be still more evident, if, instead of yielding to it, the sufferer has successfully



resisted, and died, rather than make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. In this case, let the bodily anguish have been as great, the horror of death as violent, the impulses that strove to conquer his better will as frequent and as furious as before ; yet, seeing his hatred of sin, and trust in God, and hope of eternal life, were stronger still, and were prevalent at last against all inducements to evil ;— it is clear that the temptation instead of being a sinful thing, was just one of those “fiery trials” of a Christian’s faith, which the Scripture pronounces to be “more precious than gold, that perisheth though it be tried in the fire.”

These results of common reason and observation fully agree with the established usage of scripture language ; which speaks of temptation as sometimes involving sin, and as being at other times entirely free from it. In proof of this it will be sufficient to compare one or two expressions of other inspired writers with the assertion of St. James in chap. i. 13. that “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” Here, in the first place, it is plainly not the Apostle’s intention to affirm that God cannot *in any sense* be tempted : for God himself in Psalm xcv. thus expressly warns the people of Israel—“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness : when your fathers *tempted me, proved me*, and saw my work.” Neither can it be his intention to affirm that God cannot be tempted by the

evil or sin *that is in his creatures* ; for it was precisely the hardened unbelief and stiff-necked rebellion of the Israelites that constituted the “temptation” in question, and brought down upon themselves the wrathful oath and exterminating judgments by which their carcasses fell in the wilderness. What remains then as the meaning of this declaration ? Just that God cannot be tempted by any thing sinful or unholy *in Himself*. No unrighteous thought or feeling can have a moment’s place in his most pure and sacred essence. All such evil is infinitely abhorrent to his nature ; and therefore “temptation,” as affecting God,—as operating in the divine mind,—is a thing perfectly and absolutely “without sin.”

Then, further, the Apostle intimates, that “Neither tempteth he any man.” But this expression, any more than the former, is not to be understood with absolute strictness, as if God never subjected any of the human race to temptation ; for the contrary is distinctly stated, where, in Genesis xxii., we read that “God did tempt Abraham.” And how is the apparent contradiction between these two assertions to be reconciled ? Simply by taking notice that the limitation in the former clause of St. James’s statement, belongs equally to the latter ; and that, read at large, the whole would run thus,—“God is not tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man with evil.”—“But,” adds the Apostle instantly, “every man is tempted”—that is, *sinfully* tempted—“when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.”

Sinful temptation therefore, according to this scripture, a man may certainly feel ; but then it is carefully marked that the sin is wholly from himself, and remains chargeable upon himself alone. So then, when God tempted Abraham, He could have mingled no sin with the temptation. As coming from God, it *was* a temptation ; but as coming from God, it must have been “ without sin.” *He* infused no evil feelings ; He provoked no corrupt inclinations ; yet he did (unless the scripture can be broken), He did really *tempt* Abraham. Nor is there any deep or unintelligible mystery at all in this sinless temptation. When requiring the Patriarch to sacrifice his son, God tried him by the holy affection which a man like him must have cherished for the child of his faith and of his prayers ; and still more, perhaps, by that fervent and sublime concern with which the father of the faithful must have viewed the multitude of his spiritual offspring, when the hope seemed upon the point of vanishing for ever with the expiring breath of the heir of promise. These were the pious and pure and noble sentiments, in the strange and painful effort of repressing which, as soon as they came in opposition to a divine command, the whole temptation consisted. The more successfully that these had been cultivated, and the longer that they had been indulged, the more powerful inducements would they naturally prove to misunderstand, or evade, or disobey the injunction with which it seemed impossible to reconcile them. Yet so far from being

sins,—so far from being even weaknesses, they were virtues of the highest kind : and though they might, if not duly guarded, have led to the most fatal consequences, yet as if intentionally to exclude all idea of sinfulness from our views of this temptation—no rebellious murmur—no shrinking reluctance—not the slightest movement of any unholy feeling is ever imputed in the scriptures to the patriarch's conduct under the trial : but on the contrary, it is every where made the theme of unqualified applause, and celebrated as the very triumph of a pure and unfaltering obedience.

II. This much may suffice to establish our first proposition, namely that in the nature of things, and also in accordance with the language of sacred writ, temptation may be, either sinful, or “without sin.” As a trial of what is in man, it is sometimes the one and sometimes the other. As a test of the divine character, it is always holy—“God cannot be tempted of evil.” The second assertion, namely, that those temptations which are the most sifting and terrible may, notwithstanding, be the farthest removed from sin, will admit of confirmation in fewer words. Nothing indeed can be more true than that our evil dispositions and passions, when fostered and provoked by indulgence, occasion to those who are not utterly abandoned, many a painful trial and many a bitter conflict, which might otherwise be avoided. And yet in a world where sin has introduced confusion, and demands that God in his sovereign mercy and

righteousness should often visit his own children with sharp correction, it frequently becomes needful, as in the case of Abraham, to restrain the holiest affections ; and, as in innumerable other cases, to mortify desires the most natural and most necessary, with as much rigour as the most impure and profligate :—and wherever there is a call for this, the effort of self-government is in fact a great deal more difficult, and a great deal more distressing, than when the check is to be laid only upon the excess and the exorbitance of appetite. Here again let the simplest examples teach us. Are the cravings of the intemperate palate for wine, as hard to be endured, as the natural thirst of him who pants for the waters of the gushing fountain and cannot find them ? ask the parched Ishmaelite in the desert ;—and yet the same authority in obedience to which the martyrs have so often given their bodies to be burned, might require them to perish of thirst, a fate which many probably endured, rather than deny their Lord, or worship an idol. Is the pampered appetite of the sensualist as importunate in its demands, as the unavoidable and ravenous hunger of a famishing man ? Ask the wretched mothers who in the siege of Samaria, bargained to slay in succession their own children, that they might subsist a few days longer on their flesh :—yet it is obvious that they should have determined to die of famine rather than commit those horrid and unnatural murders. Was the lust of dominion in the breast of Absalom, which excited



him, before the time, to aspire after his father's throne, a principle of greater energy than that ardour of royal and devout ambition which prompted David, when he had subdued the enemies of God's people, and firmly established their strength and prosperity, to crown a work of such extraordinary renown, by building a Temple—the only one in all the earth, where the Lord Jehovah should set his name and his worship? Surely it required a greater effort of self-denial in this case to renounce the holy ambition, than it would have done to renounce the guilty. And yet after his noble enterprize had seemed to receive the sanction both of God and men, it became the duty of David to resign it into the hands of another. But why are these things adduced? To shew how the temptations of our Lord, without being sinful in the least degree, might notwithstanding be, what we know they were, more sharp and terrible than any other. What though he had no irregular or exaggerated passions to restrain! He had holy, just, pure, heavenly affections, strong in proportion to the greatness of his soul, and warm in proportion to the brightness and dignity of their objects; which he was called upon by the nature of his undertaking, not only to control, but for a season to thwart so painfully, and to turn aside so violently, from their natural courses, that he must have needed to exercise a persevering strength of self-denial altogether matchless; and must have had in his heart experience far beyond what mere mortality could have endured, of

the profoundest sorrow, the keenest anguish, and the harshest mortification. What feelings but such as these could he have experienced in those hours of temptation, when with a spirit feelingly alive to all the refinements of celestial purity and love itself, he had to hear the loathsome suggestions, and encounter the detestable impulses, of diabolical wickedness and pollution?—or still more, when with a heart that was completely absorbed in the love of God, and that found its highest delight in the sense of his fellowship and favour, it behoved him, by his own consent, not only to feel himself forsaken of God, alone and desolate; but also to endure in his spirit, the whole expression and effect of God's infinite wrath, when roused to execute the utmost vengeance of sovereign justice, upon the sins for which, though he did not commit them, it was his lot to suffer. No trial it is evident could either be more holy or more terrible than this. Nay, in the very perfection of its holiness its terror was consummated.

III. But now we come to the third inquiry whether the temptation of Christ, being without sin, could give him a thorough experience and feeling of human infirmity in the hour of trial. To judge of this we must attend to the manner in which that sense of weakness is produced in ourselves, to which our Lord's sympathy has reference. Some *moral conflict* is necessary for the production of it: for whatever may be our real infirmity, it is only in some struggles that we have the "feeling of infirmity." Then only

are we thoroughly conscious of weakness, when putting forth our whole strength we feel it insufficient, or but little more than sufficient to meet the exigency—and are consequently open to impressions of danger and the assaults of fear. Such alarming sensations may alike be excited, whether we fail or whether we are victorious in the conflict. He that has been overcome, must indeed have felt his weakness; and yet experience will testify, that he may have a much less clear and affecting sense of it, than the man whom God's especial grace and providence have enabled to stand in the evil day; and who afterwards from a place of safety, looks back with wonder and awe upon his painful wrestlings, his perilous exposures, and his critical escapes. And why then may not our High-Priest, though unconquered, have acquired the like sensibility in his temptation? He had no sin, it is true; but did he not feel weakness? Did he not see danger? Was not his heart afraid? When tempted, had he not experience of a conflict which brought his strength and holiness to as unsparing a trial as any that befalls his people can bring theirs? What less can be intimated to us by such complaints and supplications as these? “I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels: My strength is dried up like a potsherd. Be not thou far from me, O Lord! O my strength, make haste to help me! Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me

from the lion's mouth. Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns ! ”

Our understanding and belief of this most important truth, receives some disturbance, from certain ill-defined notions of the share which our Lord's Godhead must have taken, in supernaturally sustaining his human powers while under temptation. “ The Word was God,” we say with the evangelist ; “ how then,” we add, “ could he ever be in straits ? ” The question would be quite in point, did it belong to the perfection of his fitness for the mediatorial office, or did it even consist with that fitness, that his humanity should be placed, as without doubt it could easily have been, beyond all reach of sharp and distressing temptation. But the case was far otherwise. For in that he was tempted, says the apostle, he is able to succour them that are tempted :—words which distinctly teach that in consequence of encountering painful conflict, such as calls for succour, he has acquired for the relief of others in similar circumstances, a qualification and a meetness which he could not otherwise have possessed ; but without which it is obvious that he could not be, what he now is, a perfect mediator. According to the Scriptures, then, it was the work of that Divinity which is mysteriously united with manhood in his person,—not to raise his suffering nature to such a height of glorious power as would render all trial slight and contemptible ; but to confer upon it such strength as would be infallibly sufficient—I say *infallibly sufficient*



—but not more than sufficient, just to bear him through the fearful strife that awaited him, without his being either destroyed or driven into sin—so that he might thoroughly experience in all the faculties of his soul and body, the innumerable sensations of overpowering difficulty, and exhausting toil, and fainting weakness, and tormenting anguish—and might touch the very brink of danger, though not be swept away by it, and feel all the horror of the precipice, but without falling over.

This view of the case implies no disparagement to the greatness of our Lord's endowments considered as a man. On the contrary the belief that his conflict was extreme, is held by none more consistently than by those who hold, at the same time, upon the fullest evidence, that even as a man, he was in every excellence, moral and intellectual, exalted unmeasurably, not only above all that are born of women, but even above all that is revealed of angelic sanctity or grandeur. The unrivalled greatness of his soul, was no reason why he should pass through his trial without difficulty; because the hostility and the hardship with which he had to contend was high and formidable in proportion. It was little that he was to meet the rage of confederated men, in all the plenitude of carnal power:—it was even little that he stood alone against the concentrated might of the kingdom of darkness, when it was stimulated by circumstances to the utmost violence of desperate animosity, and came armed with the whole subtilty and vehemence



of its spiritual temptations. He had to stand before the face of incensed Omnipotence—and to encounter the strokes of that flaming sword of Jehovah, which was to fall in vengeance upon the sins of an apostate world. And who then shall undertake to tell, what a marvellous enlargement of forethought and knowledge in a human soul—what an inextricable grasp of assured faith upon the promises of God—what an iron strength of holy resolution—and what inextinguishable ardours of divine and saving love—must have been found in him, who could not only before-hand resolve to meet such terrors, but could actually sustain them, and not only sustain but conquer them, when they came at once, with united force and fierceness, to wrestle with his spirit in the agonies of the cross!

Neither let it be imagined, on the other side, that the putting forth of such astonishing power by the Man Jesus, was at all inconsistent with the “feeling of infirmity.” That feeling does not depend *alone* upon the measure of a champion’s strength, whether small or great, nor alone upon the extent, whether small or great, of the force that is brought against him; but it depends still more upon the proportion—the adjustment—the almost equality, of the conflicting powers. When these differ only so much as is just sufficient to decide the combat, then he that conquers, and does hardly more than conquer, will find in every nerve, a thorough sense of his weakness. But this is not all. Though it may seem paradoxical, it is a

truth, that he will have this feeling the more perfectly, the greater degrees and varieties of skill and strength and courage and patience he may have found himself compelled to exert in the struggle. If it be one in which multitudes besides the leaders are concerned, this truth will be the more evident. The more that we enlarge the field, and multiply the destructive engines, and exasperate the fury, and magnify the consequences of battle, the more we shall deepen the sense of infirmity in him, who with his eyes open to see the whole danger, does but just rescue his life and his cause from the tumult, though it *be* by *victory*. In the shock of contending armies, when some monarch experienced in war, surveys at one view the nearly equal numbers and advantages of the opposing lines,—beholds all the strength and resources of his enemies for the work of destruction, comprehends the perilous skill and boldness of their hostile movements—and perceives the deep and ruinous impressions made by them upon his own host ; when he foresees not only the immediate discomfiture and rout and carnage which must ensue upon any failure in courage or conduct on his own part, but also the revolutions and miseries of nations that must be the consequence of his defeat. How much more strong and enlarged, at such a moment, must be *his* sense of insufficiency and inadequacy, than can be that of any ignorant soldier in his army,—or shall I say, of the war-horse that carries him—which feels no burden but the weight of his master, and

sees no danger but in the weapon that glitters at his breast ! And what has occasioned this intense feeling of infirmity in the man and the sovereign ? Nothing but the greater extent and variety of his powers, when tasked to the uttermost, by an occasion of overwhelming interest and danger. Even so, since we have no better means of arriving at the conception of spiritual things, than by likening them to earthly objects infinitely mean and contemptible in comparison—even so we may understand how Christ, in possessing the most glorious powers, can yet have had a sense of weakness more deep and affecting by far, than we, in the narrowness of our faculties, can either experience or conceive ; a sense entirely suited to the unparalleled greatness and terror of his conflict. *He* saw the conjuncture in all its awful magnitude ! He viewed the result in all its tremendous importance ! He knew himself advancing to a post where his created and mortal nature, struck with the fiery darts of hell from beneath, and pierced from above by the arrows of the Almighty, must abide the shock and pressure of a falling world ; and where the failure but for one moment of his *human* endurance and resolution, must effect not only the universal and eternal triumph of wickedness and misery ; but what it is fearful to name, even while we know it can never happen—the defeat of his Father’s counsel—the failure of his Father’s truth—and the desecration of his Father’s Godhead ! What wonder if we find it written that with a crisis like this before him, Jesus, in his “ sore

amazement," "sweated blood?" or that when the actual extremity of his agony arrived, he poured out supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to help him, and was heard indeed—but heard in that he feared?

IV. That Christ then, in his fearful though sinless conflict, thus gained a thorough 'feeling of infirmity' is certain:—that this feeling lays an ample foundation for a true and perfect sympathy with his people in all their trials, remains to be briefly manifested. The text obviously intends to teach nothing more than that the sympathy of Christ is secure to those who believe in him—who acknowledge him as their High Priest—and who hold the same attitude in which he was found on earth, striving against sin. But this does not prejudice the truth taught in many other passages of Scripture, that he regards with compassion even the very chief of impenitent sinners. That he could derive from the experience of suffering on account of sin a vivid sense of the miseries which men bring down upon themselves by their transgressions, is self-evident; and that he has no disposition to withhold from any who will accept of it, the benefit of this fellow-feeling, appears from his lamentation over the perishing rebels of Jerusalem. In one point, however, it is quite true, that his participation of such men's sentiments does entirely fail. He can have no fellowship with their love of sin. Their impure, unrighteous, ungodly thoughts and feelings are utter strangers to his heart. There can be no

concord of Christ with Belial. But is this any disadvantage to those unhappy persons in seeking salvation from him? Quite the contrary. If he *could possibly* have a fellow-feeling with their sins, yet to what end would they wish for the existence of such a feeling? Is it that he might the more indulge them in their wickedness? *That* instead of promoting their salvation would be deepening their destruction. Is it that he might the better mortify and expel their sins? But how could such an object be promoted by his concurring in their sins and entering into the spirit of them? Surely his invincible abhorrence of every, the least iniquity, and his infinite love of holiness and unspotted righteousness, are the very best pledges that sinners can desire of his most earnest readiness to aid them in renouncing all their transgressions. . Thus even where his fellow-feeling comes short, and in reference to his very enemies, it is most for their real interest that it should do so. But if any such desire to be, in every point, and to the utmost extent, in harmony with the Son of God—their course is plain:—let them repent and believe the Gospel.

To all who are already in the faith, the comfort of the text is offered without reserve. Engaged in the very same conflict by which Christ acquired his own sense of infirmity, they may rest assured that he can thoroughly appreciate theirs. With what kind or degree of infirmity can they be tried of which he had not experience? Toil, pain, poverty, disappoint-



ment, reproach and calumny, the strife of tongues, the violence of hostile deeds, oppression, mockery, murder, were his portion more than any man's. His tender feelings were wounded by the death of friends—by the anguish of a mother with the sword in her soul—by the treachery of false disciples—by the desertion, in his time of utmost need, of those who were sincerely devoted to him—by the eternal ruin of many whom “beholding he loved,” and amongst them his own unbelieving kindred. The mysterious powers of hell were let loose upon him. The hand of God touched him. These things, and more, came upon him to the uttermost. “He was tempted in all points even as we are.” Then what could we wish for besides? He is with us to relieve every one of our afflictions with the united skill of God and of a fellow-man who has experienced the same; so long as we do not willingly yield ourselves to the influences of sin, but are found like good soldiers enduring hardness for his sake.

Say not that he could not, like you, have felt the burden of conscious guilt, having committed no personal sin. For, on the one hand, the sins of the world WERE *laid to his charge*, covering him, before God and angels and men, and in his own eyes also, with the garment of shame: and, on the other hand, he hath taken all the guilt of his people wholly and for ever away, so that “there is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, who, “in striving against temptation,” are walking not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit." Then why should the sense of guilt be more disheartening to those from whom guilt has been removed, for the purposes of forgiveness, than to him upon whom guilt was laid, for the purposes of retribution?

Say not that by having committed innumerable sins your temptations from within and from without have greatly gathered strength, while your powers and means of resistance have been proportionably diminished—a source of discouragement which could not have affected Christ, as being free from the commission of sin. But wherein lies the real force of this objection? Is it not in the great hardship and difficulty of the conflict to which the disadvantages in question expose you? But is your struggle, at the worst, more severe or more desperate than was the Lord's? If not, believe not that your feeling of infirmity can be more perfect than his, or that there can be any pangs of fear or faintness in your heart which his experience did not more than parallel.

O! but in him was Godhead—and he had the promise of the Father that he should not fail nor be discouraged until his mighty task were completed. And is not Godhead also your refuge and your strength, a very present help in the time of trouble. Does not the Holy Spirit dwell also in you? and has not the Father said to you also, "Fear not, for I am with thee: Be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteous-

ness?" Nay that very Saviour, whose almighty sufficiency our cowardly distrusts pervert, by such reasonings, into a source of misgivings, instead of a theme of triumph:—can *his* destinies be separated for a moment from those of his people? Is not he himself our head, and we the members of his body? Are we not of his flesh and of his bones? Is it not the power of his resurrection that keeps us from death? Is not our life hid with Christ in God? And is not the promise absolute, that when he who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory? Let us then be strong and of a good courage. Let us fight a good fight. Let us lay hold on eternal life. Insufficient of ourselves for these things, let us look the more to that sufficiency which is promised us of God; and seeing we have not an High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Amen.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

## PART II.

### JUDGMENT OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH CONCERN- ING THE HUMAN NATURE OF OUR LORD.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### GENERAL VIEWS.

HAVING considered the doctrine of Scripture upon the Incarnation, I now proceed to inquire into the sentiments of those who from the beginning took the Scriptures for the rule of their faith. The value of the argument derived from this source will be very differently estimated by different men. But I think it must be admitted that it is a strong argument in favour of our view of Scripture, if we can shew that the immediate disciples of the Apostles took the same view. And they who are inclined to attach to the opinion of the primitive church the smallest argu-

mentative weight, must admit, that the determination of what that opinion really was, is an important point in ecclesiastical history ; which it is the more necessary to elucidate, that the fatal doctrinal error of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, has derived no small support from a total misconception upon this subject.

We naturally direct our attention, in the first instance, to the opinions entertained upon this point by the Jews, during the lifetime of our Lord. They certainly expected the Messiah to be a man, the "woman's seed." But they did not expect him to be a suffering man, though nothing concerning him be more clearly predicted by the prophets than the certainty of his sufferings. Their reluctance to believe this, together with the impossibility of evading the many and plain declarations of the prophets, gave rise to the hypothesis of *two* Messiahs, one of the tribe of Ephraim who should suffer, and another of the tribe of Judah who should reign. That he was to be truly a man, born in Bethlehem, they did not doubt. That he was to be a suffering man, they could not bring themselves to believe. The Apostles had their full share in all the national prejudices of their countrymen ; and when our Lord foretold his own death, "Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee." And when, on another occasion, signifying what death he should die, he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will



draw all men unto me," "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" This Son of Man who was to suffer, was not that Son of Man whom they expected. The reader hardly needs to be told that I make these statements without attaching much weight to them. The notions of the Jews, with some truth combined such a mass of error, as to render them of little value; but the statement is necessary in tracing the progress and nature of the opinions upon this very important subject.

It is of much greater importance to ascertain the sentiments of Simon of Samaria upon this subject. The exact nature of his opinions and pretensions it is not very easy to determine, as the accounts given of them in the primitive writers are often vague, and sometimes contradictory. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told that he gave himself out for "Some great one," and that by the people he was said to be "the mighty power of God." That he gave himself out as *one* of the powers—*δυναμεις*—of God, is certain. That he assumed to be "the mighty power of God," —*ἡ δυναμις ἡ μεγαλη*—is not quite so clear. This point would be determined, if we could determine the place which he assigned to Christ among his *Æons*. He was the first who introduced the name of Christ into the Gnostic system; and if he considered Christ to be the same as *Nous*, the first emanation from *Bythos* and *Sige*, then he must be

understood to have arrogated to himself all that the people ascribed to him. I am disposed, however, to think that his pretensions, at least at first, were of a more moderate description. For the sacred writer stating his pretensions, only says that he gave himself out to be "*some* great one," that is, I suppose some one of the many powers of God which he acknowledged; and I should rather think, that at that early period, when he seemed disposed to embrace Christianity, and to become a disciple of the Apostles, being actually baptized, he had not yet either settled his own system, or determined his own place in it. At a later period, when his boldness increased with the multitude of his dupes, he probably carried his pretensions to a higher pitch; and this may account for some portion of what appears contradictory in the accounts that we have of him. Besides, Irenæus notes it as a peculiarity of Basilides, that *he* made Christ the same as *Nous*, whence it may probably be inferred that in Simon's system Christ occupied a lower place; and consequently that he did not give himself out as "the mighty power of God," when he taught that the same Æon Christ, who had dwelt in Jesus, and had returned to the pleroma at his crucifixion, had again descended from the pleroma, and dwelt in him.

But in whatever way this may be determined, it is certain that in consequence of teaching that the Æon Christ dwelt in him, he arrogated to himself all that he understood the Apostles to ascribe to our Lord,

or that he thought ought to be ascribed to him. As our Lord had wrought miracles, so Simon pretended to do the same, deceiving the people by his "lying wonders." Our Lord was born of a Virgin Mother ; and Simon gave out also that his mother Rachel conceived him when a virgin. This has justly been considered as a decisive proof that the miraculous conception formed a part of the preaching of the Apostles ; since no other reason can be assigned why Simon should arrogate such a privilege to himself. In opposition therefore to the absurd argument so often urged, that the Ebionites rejected those parts of the Gospels which teach the miraculous conception, and therefore those parts cannot be genuine, nor the doctrine true,—though many of the Ebionites themselves believed it—we may fairly place the clearly implied testimony of Simon to the fact, that the miraculous conception was taught by the Apostles. As to his body, Simon could not say of it, as he said of that of our Lord, in direct opposition to the Apostles, that it was a mere phantom ; yet he made as near an approach to this as possible, when he taught that his own body was impassible and immortal. Nay, we are informed that it was just upon this ground that he became head of the sect. He was originally one of the disciples of Dositheus ; and it is stated in the Clementine Homilies, that his master being angry with him, struck him repeatedly with a rod ; and being confounded on observing that the rod passed through the body of Simon as

through air, he immediately resigned to him his place. Simon then assumed the title of  $\delta \epsilon \sigma \tau \omega \varsigma$  (*stans*)—the *Stander*,—because he said his flesh was so compacted by his divinity as to be fitted to endure for ever.

From Simon, his view of our Lord's flesh naturally passed to the Gnostics, as he is commonly referred to by the primitive writers as the Father of the Gnostic system. They did not mean by this to say that it originated with him ; but he acquired the eminence of being looked upon as its father, both because he made some material alterations upon it, especially by introducing Christ into it, as one of his *Æons* ; and because he appears to have been the first who travelled into different countries, for the purpose of propagating it. This he did some time before the Apostles went abroad to preach the Gospel. Theodoret tells us that when the Samaritans received the Gospel, and Simon found that he could no longer bewitch them by his Sorceries, he travelled abroad to spread his errors where men were not yet fortified by the Gospel against them. Thus Gnosticism in many instances preceded the Gospel, and as it carried the name of Christ along with it, it proved one of the most powerful obstacles to the reception of the Gospel at first, and one of the most fatal means of corrupting it afterwards.

The origin of Gnosticism is involved in an obscurity which it now seems hardly possible to penetrate. That it sprung from the Platonic philosophy, that it



sprung from the Oriental philosophy, that it sprung from the Jewish Cabbala, are opinions each of which has been maintained with great learning and ability. Into this perplexing question I am not called to enter.<sup>1</sup> I may merely remark in passing, that it is very certain that it borrowed very freely from all these sources ; and being of a very pliant nature, easily accommodated itself to the prejudices of those by whom it was adopted ; so that in one man it would more nearly approximate one of these systems, and in another another of them. From Platonism it took the doctrine that matter is uncreated and the source of all evil, from the Oriental philosophy it took the doctrine of two principles, and from the Cabbala it borrowed its system of emanations ; and it appears highly probable that one or another of these doctrines would hold a more or less prominent place in the system, according to the early education and prejudices of the individual adopting the system.

That doctrine of the Gnostics with which we are here particularly concerned, is their opinion that matter is uncreated and is the source of all evil. This doctrine I have just remarked, they derived from Platonism, and indeed it was not peculiar to Plato, but was held by other Greek philosophers. Believing this, the Gnostics utterly abhorred the doctrine of the resurrection, because they considered salvation just to consist in a total separation from matter ; and they altogether denied the Incarnation, for that would have

<sup>1</sup> See note K. Appendix.



been to unite Christ with that which is essentially evil. They maintained that the body of Christ was a mere phantom, because had he taken real flesh, it must according to their principles, have of necessity been sinful flesh, as there was none else to take : and they could not conceive that he who was sent to save men from sin, could have about him any thing sinful. On this point the Catholics fully agreed with them, that he could have nothing sinful about him. This was the common ground on which they met,—the point from which they diverged. He could not have real flesh, argued the Gnostics ; for if he had, it must have been sinful. The Catholics saw at once that this denial of the reality of his manhood was fatal to the Gospel, and utterly destroyed the work of redemption. They therefore argued that he had real flesh, but that flesh is not necessarily evil. Upon this point therefore the sentiments of the opposing parties were brought to a simple, distinct, and intelligible issue. And the simplest, shortest, and most satisfactory method of bringing out these sentiments, will be to take one of the texts of Scripture which formed the ground of contention between them, and see how they treated it. We may for this purpose take 1 Cor. xv. 50. “ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” The Gnostics urged this text in support of their own peculiar tenet, as to the essential sinfulness of flesh, and in support of their doctrine that the body of

Christ was a mere phantom. Now if the sinfulness of Christ's flesh was a doctrine of the primitive church, then the Catholic writers would of course agree with the Gnostics in their interpretation of the text. We may expect to find them not only admitting the consequence which the Gnostics urged upon them from the text, that if Christ took flesh at all it must have been sinful flesh, but glorying in maintaining that he did,—giving the Gnostics no occasion to prove it,—leaving them no room to cast it upon them as a reproach, and that founded upon a doubtful inference; but openly and strenuously declaring that, in very deed, Christ did take sinful flesh, and asserting the sinfulness of his flesh to be just the fundamental truth of Christianity. And they would then perhaps have proceeded to explain the paradox, how Christ took sinful flesh and yet was sinless. This explanation the Gnostic would not have received, but would probably have maintained that to take sinful flesh and yet be sinless, is not merely a paradox, but a contradiction in terms. Moreover had the Catholic maintained, or for one moment admitted, the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, he would have furnished the Gnostics with the means of arguing in the following resistless manner:—‘you admit that the most sacred portion of matter in existence,—that portion which was, by a peculiar work of the Holy Ghost, formed into the body of God, was fallen, sinful, rebellious, wicked flesh. But if this was the character of that portion of matter, then upon what

possible grounds can you doubt or deny that *all* matter is evil? For surely if matter can possibly exist separate from that evil which we maintain to be inherent in it, it must have so existed in the person of God. But you admit that in his person it was all evil; how then can it be doubted that it is all evil wherever it exists? To this reasoning, I cannot conceive what reply the Catholic could possibly make. Maintaining the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, he had fairly bound himself down to admit the doctrine which the Gnostics had borrowed from Greek philosophy, namely that all matter is inherently evil.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Catholics in admitting the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, gave himself up, bound hand and foot, into the power of the Gnostic; and that all matter is evil he became compelled to admit as a portion of his creed. And so clearly and inevitably does the one of these doctrines lead to the other, that I find one of the most celebrated defenders of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh in the present day, openly asserting that matter, *all* matter is *fallen*! This makes it perfectly manifest, if it were not so already, how inevitably the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh infers that of the evil of matter. That it became evil by *falling* is only adding to the irrationality of Gnosticism. I have had occasion, in the former part of this work to shew how completely the various anointings of Christ, arising out of the doctrine of the sinfulness of his flesh, establishes one of the fundamental tenets

<sup>1</sup> See Note L. Appendix.

of Gnosticism. That from the same doctrine has sprung, even in the present day, the conclusion that all matter is fallen, is a fact which shews how very clearly and inevitably that doctrine establishes another fundamental tenet of that system. The Catholic, after admitting the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, not only could have no ground upon which he could deny the evil of matter ; but he could have no reason whatever for wishing to deny it. And adopting the two fundamental tenets of Gnosticism, he had fairly abandoned the Gospel.

But do we actually find the Catholic writers, when discussing this text with the Gnostics, conceding, nay maintaining that Christ actually took sinful flesh ? Or do we find the Gnostics urging the triumphant and resistless argument with which such a concession would have furnished them ? I can only say that if such a concession on the part of a Catholic, or such a plain conclusion from it on the part of the Gnostic ever existed, a search carried over no narrow field, and conducted with no inattentive eye, has presented to me not the slightest traces of them. On the contrary, I have met with the most abundant and overwhelming evidence that a very different view of the text was taken by the Catholics, —a view from which the Gnostic, whatever advantage he might take of it, could draw no conclusion in favour of his own dogma as to the inherent evil of matter. The first writer, as far as I recollect, who undertakes to controvert the Gnostic interpre-

tation of the text is Irenæus. His interpretation of the text is, that the sentence of exclusion from the kingdom of God is pronounced not literally against flesh and blood, but figuratively against the fruits of the flesh which the same Apostle elsewhere enumerates. And the very argument by which he attempts to prove that flesh and blood cannot here be understood literally is, that the same Apostle everywhere uses these words when speaking of Christ, which in his opinion he could not have done, had there been any thing in flesh and blood unfit for the kingdom of God. I give a small portion of his argument from which the reader will clearly see the principle upon which it is founded, and the design and tendency of the whole. ‘But that the Apostle spoke not against the substance of flesh and blood, that it should not inherit the kingdom of God, appears from this that the same Apostle everywhere uses the words flesh and blood with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ; partly indeed that he may establish his manhood, (for he called himself the Son of Man) and partly also that he might certify the salvation of our flesh. For if flesh had not been to be saved, the word of God would not have been made flesh.’<sup>1</sup> Here the very fact that the expressions

<sup>1</sup> Quoniam autem non adversus ipsam substantiam carnis et sanguinis dixit Apostolus, non possidere eam Regnum Dei, ubique idem Apostolus in Domino Jesu Christo usus est carnis et sanguinis nomine; aliquid quidem, uti hominem ejus statueret; (etenim ipse semetipsum filium dicebat hominis) aliquid autem, uti salutem carnis nostræ confirmaret. Si enim non haberet caro salvari, nequaquam Verbum Dei caro factum esset. *Lib. v. Cap. 14.*



*flesh* and *blood* are applied to Christ is urged as a proof that they can *not* be sinful,—can have nothing in them unfit for the kingdom of God. Did Irenæus then, in urging this argument dream of admitting that even in Christ himself they were sinful and wicked? Nothing can possibly be more evident than that he would have shunned, indeed does shun, the impiety of such a supposition, as carefully as he shuns Gnosticism itself. We may wonder, indeed, that so judicious and discriminating a writer should have adopted a view of the text so palpably erroneous. But he was urged by the Gnostic interpretation of it, to get away from that interpretation as far as possible. We often deride the comments of the Fathers, without taking into consideration the situation in which they were placed, and the circumstances that led to these comments. There are many comments afloat in the present age, as erroneous and as ridiculous as any that will be found in the Fathers; and which not only pass without censure, but meet with high applause.

Erroneous as is the view of this text into which a dread of Gnosticism led Irenæus, the same cause induced many others to adopt the same view. He is followed in his interpretation by Tertullian, by Hilary of Rome, by Epiphanius, by Augustine, and others. Methodius attempts to escape from the difficulty of the text by a somewhat different interpretation, which he gives in his treatise on the resurrection. Not having his work by me, I cannot

give his interpretation in his own words, but it is in substance as follows:—The kingdom of God is a phrase equivalent to eternal life. But eternal life is, in its own nature, a thing superior to flesh and blood. Now it is not proper to say that what is inferior possesses that which is superior; therefore it is not proper to say that flesh and blood possesses eternal life; but it would be perfectly proper to say, that eternal life possesses flesh and blood. This interpretation, I am afraid, does not possess sufficient ingenuity to hide, or to atone for its grievous inaccuracy. It proceeds upon the supposition which was then the established interpretation, that the risen and glorified bodies of the saints are still literally flesh and blood; and on the latter clause of the verse,—“neither doth corruption inherit corruption,” he simply returns to that interpretation, observing that that is not corruption which is corrupted, but that which corrupts; and therefore the sentence of exclusion from the kingdom of God refers not to the flesh, but to the corruptions of the flesh.

When this view of the text was first promulgated, no such thing as Pelagianism was known or feared; else when the fathers felt themselves called upon to repel the conclusion, as to the sinfulness of flesh and the evil of matter, which the Gnostics drew from this text, they would have at the same time been effectually deterred from adopting a view of it, of a character so decidedly Pelagian. But when we find the Fathers labouring in the very fire to evade the

argument founded on this text by the Gnostics, and labouring to evade it by an interpretation with which we may be surprised that they could for one moment be satisfied,—an interpretation which we may be assured they never would have dreamed of, had they not been driven into it by their dread of Gnosticism, I would ask, is it in the power of any human being to believe, in the face of such facts, that in reality the Fathers admitted the very interpretation which the Gnostics gave to the text? Nay, that they actually maintained that the flesh of Christ was fallen sinful flesh? When we find the Fathers actually opposing a most determined, and I regret to add, a most injudiciously conducted opposition to the Gnostics, (attempting to prove that “flesh and blood” in the text under notice are to be understood figuratively,) is it in our power to believe that after all, they were perfectly agreed with the Gnostics, upon that very point on which such opposition was offered? This is to believe, and that in defiance of the most undeniable facts and the most overwhelming evidence, that the Fathers had abandoned one of the principal grounds which separated them from the Gnostics; and moreover that they abandoned that ground upon the point which above all others made it a matter of importance to maintain it; and, to complete the climax, that while they abandoned this ground upon this most important point, they still continued to maintain it upon points of inferior moment; for I suppose nobody asserts that they

actually went over to the Gnostics, and embraced all their notions with regard to flesh and matter. Yet all this we must believe, if we believe that the Fathers held the doctrine that our Lord's humanity was fallen sinful humanity. We must believe that to be true, which our own eyes shew us to be the reverse of the truth ; and must hold the Fathers to have maintained a doctrine which we find them opposing with a zeal which leads them directly into an opposite error.

Nor is this all. I have already had occasion to remark how very unfavourably the character of the Apostle John contrasts with that of the modern teachers of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh. The fathers must come in for their full share in the censure. They saw the heresy which denies that Christ has come "in the flesh," meeting them at every point, perverting their disciples, desolating their churches, and poisoning the streams of life. Yet when the advocates of that heresy come forward to say that they deny that Christ really took flesh, because if he did so it must have been sinful flesh, how do the fathers meet them ? Do they openly and boldly avow that this is indeed a fundamental point in their theology ? Do they proclaim it, with all that zeal which led them to face the stake and the wild beasts, that the Gnostics were on this point perfectly right,—that unless Christ took sinful flesh he must be held not to have taken flesh at all ? No, they treated this argument of the Gnostics as a most

unfounded calumny ; and go so far away from it as to maintain that we enter into heaven with all the literal reality of flesh and blood. But would the modern teachers of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh have done this ? No indeed. They profess to find the heresy which denies that Christ has come "in the flesh," deeply infecting the church at present. It cannot however be ever pretended that that heresy infects the church at present as deeply as it did in primitive times. Unguarded language may have been used, when there was no suspicion that it would be strained by a wire-drawing criticism into meanings that it never meant. Even such language I have not met with, but that is no proof that such language may not have been used. But assuredly we have not now been going from city to city, and from church to church, openly avowing, and earnestly inculcating the doctrine that our Lord's body was not flesh and blood, but a mere phantom ; and perverting the faith of many. Yet while the heresy, if it exist at all, which I more than doubt, exists in a form the danger of which is not for a moment to be compared with that in which it manifested itself in primitive times ; it is met in a manner in which the Fathers never dreamed of meeting it. There is now no room left to impute it as a reproach, or to urge it as an argument, that if Christ took flesh at all, it must have been sinful flesh ; and there is no attempting to escape the imputation, and to evade the argument, by an interpretation of a text which



will not stand a moment's examination. Not only are the truth of the imputation and the validity of the argument, which was so zealously repelled by the Fathers, fully admitted, but they are maintained with a zeal which no Gnostic ever surpassed ; and interpretations of Scripture have been advanced in their support, wilder by far than any that the Fathers ever produced to oppose them. How little then did the Fathers know of the real nature of Christianity ! or how small was their zeal in its support ! You must admit, said the Gnostics, that if Christ took real flesh, it must have been sinful flesh ; and the Fathers fly to the most palpably inaccurate interpretations of Scripture, in order to get quit of what they considered a most injurious imputation. That imputation is now adopted as the grand fundamental truth of Christianity. The sinfulness of Christ's flesh is as openly avowed, and as zealously maintained, as it was openly denied, and zealously opposed by the Fathers. And as if this were a small thing, we are called upon to believe that the Fathers really maintained a dogma which we find them opposing in every page. If the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh be true, the Fathers must stand convicted either of grievous ignorance, or of still more grievous unfaithfulness. Compare any volume of any of the Fathers, with any volume of any of the defenders of the sinfulness of the Lord's humanity ; and consider too how much more urgently the former were called upon to insist upon that doctrine, if it be

true, than the latter can possibly be ; and the Fathers will be found deserving of a reprobation for their ignorance or unfaithfulness, which must render their opinions upon any subject totally unworthy of the slightest regard. The glory of antiquity, if our Lord's flesh were really sinful, will be found to be utterly dimmed, when compared with the surpassing knowledge, and irrepressible zeal and faithfulness, of those who at present maintain that doctrine. When we find that on being charged with maintaining, by implication, the doctrine that Christ took sinful flesh, they were so far from avowing this to be true,—so far from making this doctrine the great burden of their preaching, and glorying in it, that, either through a most unaccountable ignorance, or a most inexcusable,—and in men who willingly suffered martyrdom,—an equally unaccountable timidity, they shrunk away from the doctrine as from a grievous impiety, and fled from it to interpretations of Scripture which neither they who admit, nor they who deny that doctrine can approve, we must allow that the men “of whom the world was not worthy,” were not in reality worthy of the world's slightest regard. I can only desire the reader, who has the opportunity, to compare the writings of the Fathers who so strongly,—and often in so injudicious a manner, I admit,—denied the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, with those of the modern writers who maintain that doctrine ; and then determine for themselves, whether the eulogy of the Apostle Paul was unmerited or not.

The whole history of the Gnostic controversy, will afford to those who have an opportunity of entering into it, evidence that the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh was a doctrine held in utter abhorrence by the Fathers, just as clear and decisive as that afforded by that view of the discussion upon 1 Cor. xv. 50, which I have given. But I cannot enter farther into it here.

The Apollinarian heresy will also afford us a clear view of their sentiments upon this point. This heresy took its rise from Apollinarius the younger, bishop of Laodicea, and one of the most accomplished men of antiquity, about the year 370. His followers were very soon subdivided into various parties; but I have no occasion to enter into particulars. The distinguishing tenet of this heresy was that our Lord took only a human body, but not a reasonable soul. The ground upon which they argued was this, that a human body and a reasonable soul constitute a human person: if therefore Christ assumed both a body and a reasonable soul, he assumed not human *nature* merely but a human *person*. There would thus be in Christ two *persons*; and moreover an additional person would be introduced into the Trinity, which would thus become a Quaternity. Their common saying was, We worship not a God-bearing Man, but a flesh-bearing God; and they charged the Catholics with man-worship, because they held that Christ as he was perfect God, was also perfect Man. In order to avoid dividing Christ, which they charged the Catholics with doing, they maintained that he

made the body which he assumed consubstantial with his Divinity.

The Catholics had in this case two things to do ; they had a very fatal heresy to oppose, and they had a very serious charge to repel. How they opposed the heresy, and proved that Christ took a reasonable soul as well as a true body, has already been seen in the first part. I have here only to notice the manner in which they met the charge of dividing Christ, and introducing an additional person into the Trinity. This charge was founded upon their denial that the flesh of Christ was consubstantial with his Divinity. Now this is a charge which, had the Catholics held the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, would have compelled them not merely to state that doctrine, but to bring it forward in the most distinct and prominent manner, and to urge it as earnestly as it is urged by those who hold that doctrine now ; for it is not possible to conceive a more simple, direct, and decisive reply to the charge, that they made the flesh of Christ an additional person in the Trinity, than simply to say, that so far were they from making the flesh of Christ an additional person in the Trinity, or an object of worship at all, that they held his flesh to be fallen, sinful, wicked flesh, guilty and alienated from God. This reply would at once have effectually silenced the most obstinate Apollinarian. He would have been compelled to admit that he did not understand them to have such a view of the flesh of Christ as this, else he assuredly would

never have accused them of making it an additional person in the Trinity, an additional object of worship ; how clearly soever he must still hold them guilty of dividing the indivisible Christ of God. Yet if ever this simple and decisive reply was given by the Catholics, I can only say, that I have never met with it, nor ever been able to detect the slightest trace of it. That the Apollinarians did not believe the Catholics to hold the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, any more than they themselves did, is perfectly clear, because they brought against them a charge totally irreconcilable with that notion. And that the Catholics in reality held no such doctrine, is equally clear from the fact, that they did not, in their disputes with the Apollinarians, bring forward a doctrine which would have enabled them to give, in a single sentence, the most overwhelming refutation of the grievous charge brought against them by these heretics. Or, if it be alleged that they actually did bring forward the doctrine in question, in a dispute which so imperiously required it to be brought forward in the most prominent manner, let the passage be produced that it may be examined. And if no such argument as that furnished by the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh was used by the Catholics against the accusations of the Apollinarians, the omission must be held to be fatal to the assertion, that that doctrine had a place in the faith of the primitive church. Even the Apollinarians brought no such charge against it.



This view of the manner in which the Catholics did *not* meet the charge of the Apollinarians, will derive considerable light from a view of the manner in which they really did meet it. They not only rebutted, but successfully retorted the charge by reasoning in this conclusive manner,—‘you say that the flesh of Christ was consubstantial with his divinity. But consubstantiality implies an identity of substance, together with a distinct personality. Thus the Son is consubstantial with the Father, that is, he is of the same substance with the Father. But then if he were one person, as he is one nature with the Father,—if he had not a distinct personality, then there is no ground upon which he could be said to be consubstantial with the Father. Without this distinct personality he would be not consubstantial, but identical with the Father. You therefore, in making the flesh of Christ consubstantial with the Word, make that flesh indeed to be Divine, but you make it a distinct person from the Word; for that flesh cannot possibly both be the Word, and be also consubstantial with the Word.’ The Apollinarians were thus effectually proved to be guilty of that very error which they attributed to the Catholics. In declaring the flesh to be consubstantial with the Word, they clearly taught that it was a distinct person from the Word,—for a person cannot be consubstantial with himself—and thus introduced an additional person into the Trinity.

The first writer who reasons against the Apollinarians in this manner, is Athanasius in his admirable letter to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, upon the subject. I prefer, however, exhibiting the argument as it is given by Ambrose, who has stated it in language so perfectly similar to that of Athanasius, as to make it clear that he borrowed it from that author ; while he gives it in a somewhat improved form. In reference to the accusations of the Apollinarians, he says, — ‘ Nor do I fear lest I should seem to introduce a quaternity : for we truly worship only a Trinity who assert this,—*namely, that Christ had a soul as well as a body, and had not flesh consubstantial with the Divinity.*—For I do not divide Christ when I distinguish between the substance of his flesh, and of his Divinity ; but I preach one Christ, with the Father, and the Spirit of God ; and I will demonstrate that they rather introduce a quaternity who maintain that the flesh of Christ is of the same substance with his Divinity. For what is consubstantial is not one person, but one thing,—*non unus sed unum*—for certainly the Nicene Fathers, confessing the Son to be consubstantial with the Father, believed not that there was one *Person* but one *Divinity* in the Father and the Son. When therefore they—*the Apollinarians namely*—say, that the flesh was of the same substance as the Son of God, they themselves, by the absurdity of their assertion, do what they object to us,—they divide Christ. They therefore introduce a *fourth* uncreated person whom we may

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adore ; while there is nothing uncreated saving the Godhead of the Trinity.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Apollinarian controversy affords us evidence of the most decisive kind, that the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh was a doctrine totally rejected by the primitive church. We have the distinct testimony of the Apollinarians to this, for they charge the Catholics with making the humanity of our Lord a distinct person of the Godhead. And the Catholics themselves, even though urged by such a charge, never attempt to meet it by declaring their belief that the humanity of our Lord, so far from being a distinct person of the Godhead, was fallen, sinful humanity, but employ a very different mode of reasoning in order to escape the charge.

<sup>1</sup> Nec timeo ne tetrada videar inducere, nos enim vere solam, qui hoc adserimus, colimus Trinitatem. Non enim Christum divido, cum carnis ejus divinitatisque distinguo substantiam : sed unum Christum cum Patre et Spiritu Dei prædico, et illos magis qui carnem Christi unius cum divinitate ejus dicunt esse substantiæ, tetrada inducere demonstrabo. Non enim quod ejusdem substantiæ est, unus, sed unum est ; nam utique Filium ejusdem cum Patre substantiæ confitentes, in tractatu concilii Nicæni, non unam personam, sed unam divinitatem in Patre et Filio crediderunt. Ergo cum dicunt ejusdem carnem, cujus et Filius Dei erat, fuisse substantiæ ; ipsi quod nobis objiciunt ineptiis vanæ adsertionis incurrunt, ut dividant Christum. Itaque quartum increatum, quod adoremus, inducunt ; cum sola increata sit divinitas Trinitatis. *De Incarnationis Dominicæ Sacramento, Cap. 7.* I must request the attention of the reader to the original. The concluding sentence of the argument, as given by Athanasius in his letter to Epictetus, whence it seems plain that Ambrose borrowed it, is as follows :—Ὡς γὰρ υἱὸς ὢν κατ’ αὐτοὺς ὁμοουσιος τῷ Πατρὶ, οὐκ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς Πατὴρ, ἀλλὰ υἱὸς πρὸς Πατέρα λεγέσθαι ὁμοουσιος. ὅπως τὸ ὁμοουσιον σῶμα τοῦ Λόγου οὐκ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς ὁ Λόγος, ἀλλ’ ἕτερον πρὸς τὸν Λόγον. Ἐτέρου δὲ οὐτός, ἐστὶ κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἡ αὐτὴ Τριάς λεγέσθαι. For the Son being, according to them, consubstantial with the Father, is not himself the Father, but is called the Son consubstantial with the Father ; even so the consubstantial body of the Word, is not itself the Word, but another with the Word. But being another, the Trinity will, according to them, be a quaternity.

That the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity formed no part of the faith of the primitive church, is clear from this also, that that doctrine is just an extension of the heresy of Nestorius which was solemnly condemned in a general council, and has been reprobated by every Catholic writer. To say that *Christ* was fallen and sinful, is so direct blasphemy, that I suppose no man will venture to use such language. But to apply to the humanity of Christ language which it would be held not only improper but even blasphemous to apply to Christ himself, is to divide Christ, more clearly and more violently than Nestorius ever did. To use language with regard to any department of Christ's person, which cannot be properly used with regard to the whole undivided person, is very distinctly to make two persons in Christ. I think it has already been satisfactorily shewn, that even supposing the existence of such a thing as a *fallen nature* possible, yet it can exist only as the nature of a fallen person. If then there was in Christ a *fallen nature*, there was in him a *fallen person*. No proposition I conceive can be clearer than this, that if the humanity of our Lord was fallen and sinful, then either our Lord himself was a fallen and sinful person, or the humanity was a person distinct from himself. If the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity be admitted, then must it also be admitted that in him there were not two natures united indissolubly in one person ; but two persons in a state of unceasing opposition to one

another. The one person, infected with all the evil propensities of fallen man, was perpetually lusting after all forbidden things ; while the constant employment of the other person was just to repress and control these evil propensities, and to compel the person in whom they resided to yield an unwilling obedience to God ; such an obedience as Satan yields.

Now this is Nestorianism carried to an extent to which Nestorius never dreamed of carrying it, and from which he would indeed have shrunk with horror. He protested to the last that he believed that there were in Christ two natures and one person. But this could avail him nothing in the face of language and arguments which plainly implied that the humanity had a distinct personality ; language and arguments, however, which are orthodoxy itself, when compared with those to which we are now accustomed. If the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity be true, then it is clear that the only just ground upon which Nestorius could have been condemned, was for not carrying his principles far enough. A division of the person of Christ was clearly enough implied in what he taught, though he denied as loudly as the teachers of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity can deny, that he held any such opinion. And he could make the denial upon much better grounds than they can ; for he held that the humanity was, by its union with the divinity, invested with equal power and dignity with the Word, and was



equally the object of veneration and worship. Indeed the Nestorianism of Nestorius is an absolute trifle when compared with the Nestorianism of the present day. And if the tenet of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh was held by the Fathers assembled at Ephesus, it was natural enough that they should condemn Nestorius; but then they could condemn him only for not being sufficiently Nestorian,—for being incomparably less of a Nestorian than themselves.—Unless then we be prepared to maintain a position so utterly ridiculous as this, that Nestorius was condemned for not being sufficiently Nestorian,—for not being deeply enough imbued with the heresy to which he gave his name, we cannot maintain that the sinfulness of Christ's flesh was a doctrine of the primitive church.

This matter may be placed in a different point of view. The same person cannot be both fallen and unfallen. Now God has a Son begotten of his substance from all eternity, and who can never be said to be fallen. This same person did, for the purpose of manifesting the Divine perfections through the medium of our Salvation, condescend to be begotten in time, of the substance of the Virgin Mary. But if the Son of God, begotten in time was a fallen sinful Son, then it is plain that there are two Sons, two Lords, two only begottens; for the fallen Son, and the unfallen Son, cannot be one and the same Son, but must of plain necessity be two Sons. This was one of the consequences deduced from the lan-

guage of Nestorius, though he denied that such a deduction could be fairly made. Few, I apprehend, will be disposed to deny, that it is at least fairly deducible from that theology which divides the person of Christ more openly and more violently by far, than ever did Nestorius. The new theology admits, what is indeed too palpable to be either denied or doubted, that sin can be no otherwise than in a person. It teaches also that every possible variety of human wickedness was inherent in the humanity of our Lord. The consequence is clear as light, that that humanity was a person; and that person being the Son of God as well as the Son of Man, there are two Sons, and two Christs. If the primitive church held the tenet of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, I would ask again, upon what possible ground could Nestorius be condemned, unless it was for not being sufficiently Nestorian?

I would next advert to the Manichæan doctrine, as affording another decisive proof that the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity was no doctrine of the primitive church. Augustine unquestionably knew well what was the doctrine of the church, of which he was one of the brightest ornaments, and one of the ablest defenders. Now Augustine, as we have already seen, declares the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh to be an 'outrageous blasphemy' and a 'detestable heresy.' But he goes still farther, and repeatedly and strongly maintains, in opposing Manichæism, that no such thing as an evil *nature*

ever did exist, or by any possibility ever can exist. Now the question is not at present whether Augustine was right or wrong, but, in denying that our Lord took a sinful nature, nay in denying the possibility of the existence of such a nature, was he aware that he was ploughing up the very foundation of Christianity? Did he conceive that, in denying that Christ took such a nature, he was in reality denying that Christ was man at all? He himself certainly believed no such thing. Nor did any of his contemporaries, or, as far as I know, any of those who have gathered delight and improvement from his writings in succeeding ages, bring any such charge against him. He denied that our Lord took fallen flesh, though he took it of a fallen mother; he denied that he took a fallen sinful nature, for he denied that any such nature ever existed. And yet he neither himself suspected, nor did any other ever suspect him, of having, in so doing, opposed the doctrine of the church, nay, of having thrown down the very corner stone of all sound theology.

It may be remarked too, that if Augustine was actually opposing the received doctrine of the church, when declaring that the flesh of Christ was not sinful, and that there is no such thing as an evil nature, then the great principle upon which he assails Manichæism completely fails, and the fundamental tenet upon which that system is built, is clearly proved to form an essential part of primitive Christianity. Augustine reprobates in terms of the most unmea-

sured severity the doctrine that the flesh of Christ was sinful, not differing from ours in any thing. Was it the grand foundation of all sound theology of which he thus speaks ; and speaks without having ever been reproved for it ? Augustine maintains that there is no evil nature, and consequently could not believe that Christ took such a nature. Was he utterly wrong ? and must Manichæism be still admitted as an essential part of orthodox Christianity ? It may surely be hoped that in the present age there are few indeed capable of admitting this. Yet if the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity was the doctrine of the primitive church, all this must inevitably be admitted.

I have, laying by me, an octavo volume in defence of Montanism, the great object of which is to prove that all the primitive Christians were Montanists, and the modest title of which is—'The general delusion of Christians, touching the ways of God's revealing himself, to, and by the Prophets, evinced from Scripture and primitive antiquity.' Dr. Priestly has written six volumes to prove that they were all Unitarians, in the Socinian sense of that word. We are now required to believe that they were all Nestorians, and moreover all Manichæans. Absurdity is surely exhausted ; and I may venture to hope that my work will possess somewhat of the charm of novelty, when I attempt to shew, that the members of the primitive church were neither Montanists, nor Socinians, nor Nestorians, nor Manichæans, but Christians. That

with the guilt of the two last-mentioned heresies they were not chargeable ; and therefore that they did not, and could not, admit the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, (which teaches them both as plainly as they were ever taught,) is proved, I conceive, as decisively as it is possible for any historical fact to be proved, by the view of a few of the principal heresies with which they had to contend, which has just been given. Proofs drawn from this source might be multiplied to an indefinite extent ; but what I have drawn from this source of evidence, is surely amply sufficient. Before proceeding to quote more particular testimonies to the fact, that the ancients did not believe in the sinfulness of the humanity of our Lord, I may properly close these general views, and introduce more particular authorities by the testimony of a modern writer, which will, I suppose, by all parties be held to be completely decisive.

The writer to whom I refer is Doctor Priestley. In prosecuting his great design of proving that all the primitive Christians were Socinians, every one at all acquainted with the matter will see, how highly important it would have been for him to prove, that they held our Lord's humanity to be, not fallen indeed, which he believed no man to be, but in all respects similar to our humanity. He maintains that Justin Martyr was the first of the Fathers who taught the Divinity of Christ. It would have been a strong support,—and they only who have traced the line



of argument which he adopts, can see how very strong a support to his system it would have been, had he been able to shew that all the Fathers, both before Justin and after him, down to the Council of Nice, believed our Lord's humanity to be exactly such as ours. In fact, it was in a great measure fatal to his whole system of reasoning to admit, that even with regard to his human nature, the Fathers, both before and after Justin, considered Christ as being *ου ψιλος ανθρωπος*, no common man. Of this, Priestley was perfectly sensible. He was bound to prove, if he could, that as to his humanity at least, the Fathers held Christ to be merely a common man, exactly such as we are. But he felt that any attempt to prove this was utterly hopeless. Of such a man, with all his errors, I regret to say that he was by no means overburdened with scruples. No man was better able to rear a plausible theory out of the most slender materials ; no man could with more admirable tact, mask the strong points of an opponent's argument, and the weak points of his own ; in short, where he knew his ground,—and in this case he had studied it well—a more skilful tactician never took the field of controversy. But with all this, essential as it was to him to prove, that the Fathers held Christ, as to his humanity, to have been in no respect different from other men, yet he did not venture to attempt the proof. Even the scanty materials out of which he could have framed a plausible proof, were not to be had. Such an assertion would have

been, he well knew, to expose himself to the most overwhelming defeat. He saw well how fatal this was to his system ; but he managed the matter with his usual skill. Without taking the slightest notice of the fatal effect which the doctrine held by the Fathers, with regard to the humanity of our Lord, has upon his system, he tacitly attempts to neutralize their testimony upon the subject, by charging them with maintaining the error exactly and diametrically opposed to that of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity. He charges them with holding an opinion upon the subject, that in effect differed little from that of the Gnostics, who openly denied the reality of his manhood. He charges them with the very same error with which they, who teach the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, so loudly charge the church at the present day. Here is a portion of what he writes on the subject.—

‘ Lastly, some of the Gnostics thought that Christ had no real body, and consequently, had not the sensations or feelings of one ; but the orthodox principle of the union of the divine nature to the human produced almost the same effect. For some of the Catholics supposed that, in consequence of this union, the body of Christ was exempt from all disagreeable sensations ; and indeed *this was a natural consequence of their principles*. For if there was a real union between the two natures, the sensations of the one must have been communicated to the other ; and as it was agreed that the divine nature could not

feel pain, the human nature, in order to enjoy the benefit of the union, ought to be exempt from pain also, which we shall find was actually held by Hilary.

‘In general however, it was maintained that the human nature of Christ was as effectually deserted by the divine nature in the day of suffering, as the Gnostics had ever supposed it to be; and it is very remarkable, how nearly the language of the orthodox on this subject approached to that of the Gnostics.’<sup>1</sup>

Again a little after, he says, ‘It being, therefore, a settled point, that the divine nature of Christ could not feel pain; it is no wonder that some of the orthodox should have argued with those Gnostics who held that his body, or what had the appearance of a body, had not the wants and weaknesses of other bodies, and was likewise insensible of pain.’ And a few pages after—‘That the body of Christ was naturally incorruptible was an opinion very prevalent among the orthodox after the Council of Nice.’ p. 256.

So then, if Priestley cannot get an argument in favour of his system, by shewing, that with regard to our Lord’s humanity the primitive Christians held that he did not differ from us in any thing—an opinion which he would have thought a sound one; he is determined at least to neutralize the fatal effect of their testimony against him, by giving what I must call a very unfair and exaggerated view of the opinion

<sup>1</sup> History of Early Opinions, Vol. II. p. 247.

which they really did hold upon the subject. The statements which I have quoted from him, are intermingled with testimonies from a few of the Fathers. But in selecting these testimonies he has been careful just to lay hold of a few of the most objectionable expressions that he could find ; and these also sometimes taken from writers who never had, and never deserved to have the slightest weight or authority in the church ; and sometimes from writers whose notorious unsoundness upon the question has always been the subject of remark and regret. He refers, for example to Hilary as openly maintaining, what he considers as a necessary consequence of orthodox principles, that the body of our Lord was exempt from pain. Now he knew perfectly well, that on this point Hilary was directly opposed to the orthodox. But then he knew also that the accuracy of his reference to that writer could not be called in question ; and therefore is pleased to insinuate the perfect soundness of Hilary, and to represent his absurd and heretical views as being necessarily involved in the principles of the orthodox. The extreme unfairness of this is but ill-atoned-for by the insidious admission which immediately follows, that in general it was believed that the human nature was effectually deserted by the divine in the hour of suffering. Whether the reference to Hilary, or the apparent concession which follows it, be most unworthy of a man who has truth for his object, I shall not attempt to determine.

One thing however is clear, and it is important. To have been able to prove that the primitive church held the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, would have been to him of more value than all the other facts which he has brought forward. But he felt it easier to undertake the task,—the hopeless indeed, yet still easier task of proving that the Fathers held exactly the opposite extreme, and maintained with regard to our Lord's humanity, a view that in effect differed little from that of the Gnostics, who altogether denied the reality of his flesh. Such a testimony, and especially given under such circumstances, is altogether resistless. *Firmum est genus probationis, quod etiam ab adversario sumitur, ut veritas etiam ab ipsis inimicis veritatis probetur.*

As a general proposition it is susceptible of abundant and satisfactory proof, that the primitive church was perfectly sound on the subject of our Lord's humanity, neither improperly refining it away with the Gnostics, nor yet on the contrary imputing sinfulness to it. But it cannot be denied that the Fathers, especially the earlier of them, writing in the simplicity of their hearts, and paying little attention to exactness of expression, do occasionally make use of language which, if rigorously understood, would lead to dangerous error. Their constant tendency however, when they use language that deviates from the line of strict orthodoxy, is toward the error of improperly exalting the humanity of our Lord. So much is this the case, that they have afforded to



Priestley a plausible ground for charging them with Gnosticism. To prove this charge is impossible ; yet he felt that he could give to it a colour, of which the far more important position to him, that they held our Lord's flesh to be fallen and sinful, is not susceptible. His followers will doubtless rejoice, if it can be proved that he was on this point so totally mistaken, that the primitive Christians actually held the opposite extreme to that with which he charges them ; and that his attempt to neutralize their testimony by charging them with Gnosticism, is not only desperate, but is wholly unnecessary. It could hardly have been expected that we should, in the present day, be called upon to repel a charge against the Fathers which even Priestley could not venture to bring, though could he have proved it, it would have done more for Socinianism than all that he has written ; but he preferred the easier task of undertaking to prove their agreement with the Gnostics, who altogether denied our Lord's flesh. The consolation is, that what he did not dare to attempt, his followers can hardly be supposed able to accomplish. In the mean time his devotion to Socinianism gives incalculable weight to his testimony as to the faith of the primitive church upon this important subject.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PARTICULAR TESTIMONIES.

IN proceeding to produce more particular testimonies from antiquity, it will be proper to commence with the decisions of general councils. In the council of Ephesus, held in the year 431, the doctrine of Nestorius was condemned, though, as I have already had occasion to observe, he never divided the person of Christ so clearly or so violently as they do who teach that his flesh was fallen and sinful. In that council the celebrated *twelve chapters* of Cyril of Alexandria were adopted as a correct exposition of the Catholic faith with regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation. It would be tedious to copy the whole of these, but I shall present the reader with two of them. The *fourth* chapter is this—‘If any one distribute to two persons or hypostases, the expressions which occur in the evangelical and apostolical writings, and which are spoken either by the saints concerning Christ, or by Christ concerning himself; and apply some as suitable to the man, considered apart from the Word of God the Father; and

others, as suitable to God, solely to the Word of God the Father, let him be anathema.’<sup>1</sup> Here a general council of the Christian church solemnly condemns the application of language to the humanity of our Lord, as contemplated apart from his Divinity. And who that has attended to what the Bible says upon the subject can doubt for a moment the justice of the condemnation; for where do the sacred writers ever apply to one of the two natures united in Christ, language which they would not apply to the whole undivided and indivisible person of Christ? If it can be shewn that there is any one term that may truly be applied to either of the natures united in Christ, that cannot with perfect propriety and truth be applied to Christ, then Nestorius was right, and the sacred writers were most unnecessarily, nay most improperly scrupulous, for they have misled the orthodox from the beginning. But they who teach that the humanity of Christ was fallen and sinful humanity, do most directly oppose this rule, and incur this anathema; for they do apply, to the one nature of Christ, language which they would hold it blasphemous to apply to Christ. And they do not put us to the trouble of proving, what indeed can with little trouble be proved, but openly profess and avow, that in their specu-

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ τις προσωποῖς δυσὶν, ἡγουν υποσάσσει, ἰας ἰε ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελικοῖς, καὶ ἀποστολικοῖς συγγράμμασι διανεμεῖ φωνάς, ἡ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ παρὰ τὸν ἁγίων λεγομένης, ἡ παρ’ αὐτοῦ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ· καὶ ἰας μὲν ὡς ἀνθρώπων παρὰ τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ πατρός λογὸν ἰδικῶς νοούμενον προσάπτει, ἰας δὲ ὡς θεοπρεπείας μόνῳ ἰω ἐκ Θεοῦ πατρὸς λόγω, ἀνάθεμα ἐσώ. *Cyril's Works, Vol. VI. p. 167.*

lations upon that humanity which is described as fallen, sinful, guilty, and alienated from God, and inclined to all forbidden things, they speak of it as contemplated apart from the Divine Nature, apart from which, if it ever existed, then the council of Ephesus, and the whole Christian church in all ages, must plead guilty to the charge, not merely of unaccountable ignorance, but of fatal error. The council denounces its anathema upon those who contemplate the humanity apart from the Divinity. They who teach the sinfulness of Christ's humanity openly profess to contemplate the humanity apart from the Divinity, and maintain that they have the authority of the primitive church, and indeed of the Catholic church in all ages, for their speculations. Here then the only question is, whether shall we believe the unsupported assertion of a few modern writers, or the solemn declaration of the council of Ephesus with regard to the faith of the primitive church? And this is a question which I suppose no reader would thank me for wasting a moment in determining.

The following is the *eleventh* of the *twelve chapters*, — 'If any one confesseth not that the flesh of our Lord was quickening, and the very flesh of the very Word of God the Father; but maketh it as it were the flesh of some other besides him, conjoined with him in dignity; or as flesh having the divinity dwelling in it, and not rather that it was quickening, because made the very flesh of the Word, who is able

to quicken all things, let him be anathema.<sup>1</sup> That the council was perfectly orthodox in its sentiments there is no room to doubt ; but that this language is very objectionable, inasmuch as it is extremely liable to abuse, cannot be denied. Had such language been used by any of the defenders of the Catholic faith in the present day, no terms of reprobation would have been found sufficiently strong to characterize it. Nor do I say this upon conjecture ; for every term of reprobation has been exhausted, by those who maintain the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, upon language from which no such meaning could be extorted, as that which may be so naturally and easily deduced from the language of the Council of Ephesus. No fault, however, was found with the strongest of the language in ancient times. Cyril who penned it was looked upon as the very standard of orthodoxy, though his writings contain much language still more objectionable than this. The Oriental bishops who opposed the *twelve chapters*, shewed very plainly by the objections which they made to them, that their opposition arose from personal pique against Cyril, and from no doubt whatever as to the soundness of his doctrine ; the orthodoxy of which very soon after the sitting of the Council they very fully admitted, though they

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ ἡν τοῦ Κυρίου σάρκα ζωοποιον εἶναι, καὶ ἰδιαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐκ Θεοῦ πατρὸς λόγου, ἀλλ' ὡς ἑτέρου ἴνους παρ' αὐτὸν συνημμένου μεν αὐτῷ κατὰ ἡν αξίαν, ἡγουν ὡς μονὴν θείαν ἐνοικήσιν ἐσχηκότος, καὶ οὐχι, δη μαλλὸν ζωοποιον, ὡς εἶπεν, οτι γεγονεν ἰδια τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ἰα πάντα ζωοποιεῖν ἰσχυρότος, ἀνατίεμα ἐσῶ. *Cyril's Works*, Vol. vi. p. 190.



objected, and I think very justly, to some of the terms in which it was expressed. But that they were far from objecting to that language, on account of its distinct condemnation of the tenet of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, appears very clearly both from their own remarks upon it, and from those of Theodoret their great defender. I shall quote a few lines from the latter, which will clearly shew this. He first charges Cyril with embracing in this chapter the Apollinarian heresy, because he mentions only the *flesh* of Christ, without noticing his soul, a heresy of which Cyril not only was not guilty, for by flesh he meant the whole humanity, but of which Theodoric could hardly help knowing that he was not guilty. After thus attaching to the chapter a heresy to which it gives no countenance, he concludes his remarks thus:—‘But we declare the animated and rational flesh of the Lord to be quickening, through the quickening Godhead united to it. But he himself reluctantly confesses the difference of the two natures, when he mentions flesh, and God the Word, and calls it his own flesh. God the Word then was not changed into the nature of flesh, but has his own proper flesh, namely the assumed nature, which he made quickening by the union.’<sup>1</sup> Now nothing but the heat of one of the fiercest controversies that ever agitated the church, would have

<sup>1</sup> Ἡμεῖς δὲ ζωοποιον εἶναι φάμεν τὴν ἐμψυχον, καὶ λογικὴν τοῦ Κυρίου σαρκά, διὰ τὴν ἡνωμένην αὐτῇ ζωοποιον Θεοῦ ἰδέα. Ὁμολογεῖ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀκὼν ὡς δύο φύσεων τὸ διαφορὸν, σάρκα λέγων, καὶ θεὸν λόγον, καὶ ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ

prevented so able, and so very candid a writer as Theodoret from seeing, what he afterwards very readily owned, that his own doctrine was precisely that of Cyril, and expressed indeed in almost the very terms of Cyril. The most objectionable at least of these terms, the ‘quickenings flesh,’ he uses without scruple; only he takes care to shew that by flesh he means not merely the body of Christ, but his complete manhood. But then Cyril and the Council meant this just as certainly as he did, only they did not put in the words ‘animated and rational,’ in order to shew that it was not merely of the body of Christ that they were speaking, when they talked of his flesh; as they could not anticipate that any person would so far misunderstand them, as to suspect them of a leaning to the heresy of Apollinarius. Now let the reader who is interested in this question, (and I take it for granted that every Christian feels deeply interested in it,) compare the language, I do not say of the Catholic Council of Ephesus, but the language of Theodoret while writing expressly against that Council,—of Theodoret who suffered much in his person while living, and much in his reputation when dead, as a Nestorian, with the language against which such a vehement outcry of heresy has been raised at the present day; and let him determine

προσαγορευων ἴην σαρκα. Οὐκ οὐν οὐχ ὁ θεὸς λόγος εἰς σαρκὸς ἐλθραπὴ φύσιν, ἀλλ’ ἰδίαν ἔχει σαρκα, ἴην ἀναληφθεῖσαν φύσιν, καὶ ζωοποιον αὐτὴν ἴη ἐνώσει πεποιηκεν. *Theodoret's Works*, Vol. iv. p. 721. and *Cyril's Works*, Vol. vi. p. 237.

whether the latter ever could give a thousandth part of the ground for the outcry which is given by the former against the opposite heresy of Eutyches. Nay, let him compare the language of Theodoret, the accused and persecuted Nestorian,—let me do him the justice of saying, most unjustly accused of that heresy, and most iniquitously persecuted for it,—with the habitual language of those who charge all with Nestorianism who deny that the flesh of Christ was fallen, sinful, wicked flesh ; and then let him try to imagine, if he can, what sentence the Council which condemned Theodoret, would have pronounced upon those who are guilty of such language. If they be right, then nothing can be more clear than the fact, that all the pretended denials of the flesh of Christ in the present day, are perfectly orthodox, when compared with the gross and glaring heresy of the Council of Ephesus ; and even with the heresy of Theodoret, repeatedly condemned for the very opposite heresy of Nestorianism. In fact, while I have seen no language used by any defender of the Catholic faith in the present day, from which any thing approaching to a denial of the flesh of Christ could by any fair interpretation be inferred ; the language of both the Council of Ephesus, and of Theodoret is such, that though I doubt not the soundness of their sentiments, yet I should be sorry to defend the mode in which these sentiments are expressed. For I think that a very rigid interpreter of the language quoted above, might easily find both

guilty of incautiously and unintentionally making by far too near an approach to that heresy, with which the church is at present so groundlessly charged.

I proceed next to the council of Chalcedon in 451. If ever the doctrine that the flesh of Christ was fallen sinful flesh, was held by the church, then the open and unequivocal expression of that doctrine was imperiously called for here. Neither the Gnostic nor the Apollinarian heresy more urgently demanded the expression of that doctrine, than did the heresy of Eutyches which was condemned in this council. Eutyches maintained that after the Incarnation there was still only one nature in Christ, formed by some unintelligible mingling of the human and divine natures. He thus made Christ a person neither human nor divine, but something more than man, and less than God. While therefore he exalted the humanity of our Lord too high, as if it had been absorbed by the divinity, and was no longer true humanity, we might expect to hear from every quarter of the council the plain, distinct, and urgent declarations, not merely that the human and divine nature remained perfectly distinct and unmixed in Christ, but that he was not only really man, but a fallen sinful man. Had some of the *six hundred and thirty* bishops assembled, used language which might seem to derogate from the dignity of our Lord's humanity, —to imply, nay openly to declare that it was fallen sinful humanity, there not only would have been no

reason to be surprized at it ; but had they believed that doctrine, then were they, with all their zeal, guilty of a grievous dereliction of duty in not expressly embodying that doctrine in their canons. There is certainly no such necessity now as there was then, for inculcating the doctrine that Christ, as to his humanity, differed nothing whatever from us in guiltiness and alienation from God. Yet so far was the council from inculcating and reiterating that doctrine, that they condemn it in terms as clear and express as can be chosen.

In this council the letter of the council of Ephesus to Nestorius was read, and received with acclamations. The council also adopted, as a correct exposition of the faith of the church upon the subject, a letter addressed by Leo bishop of Rome, to Flavian bishop of Constantinople, the following extract from which will shew what were their sentiments with regard to the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh. After stating that the properties of the two natures remain entire in the one person of Christ, who was *totus in suis, totus in nostris*, the letter thus proceeds,—‘ But those things we call ours which the Creator formed in us from the beginning, and which Christ assumed that he might restore. For as for those things which the deceiver brought in, and man, being deceived, admitted, there was no vestige of them in the Saviour. Nor because he undertook the communion of human infirmities, was he therefore a partaker of our delinquencies. He assumed the form of a servant without



the defilement of sin, increasing what was human, not diminishing what was divine.’<sup>1</sup> I quote not this as the language of Leo, who in many parts of his writings, especially in his Sermons upon the Nativity denies the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh, but as the language of the council of Chalcedon, which adopted it as the expression of their own decision upon the subject. Now the reader I think will agree with me, that if a council were assembled at present, in order to condemn the doctrine of those who declare that the flesh of Christ was fallen, sinful, wicked flesh ; that taking flesh of a fallen sinful woman, he partook of his mother’s impurity ; that his will was in bondage to the devil, the world, and the flesh ; they could not condemn such impieties in more pointed or appropriate terms than those used by the council of Chalcedon. Had the council believed any such doctrine, had they believed that in our Lord was that law of the members which warreth against the law of the mind,—that lusting of the flesh against the spirit,—that inclination to all forbidden things,—and all the evil propensities of the fallen man, which we derive from the fall of Adam, could they by any possibility have declared, that ‘as for those things which the deceiver brought in, and man, being

<sup>1</sup> Nostra autem dicimus, quæ in nobis ab initio Creator condidit, et quæ reparanda suscepit. Nam illa quæ deceptor intulit, et homo deceptus admisit, nullum habuere in Salvatore vestigium. Nec quia communionem humanarum subiit infirmitatum, ideo nostrorum fuit particeps delictorum. Assumpsit formam servi, sine sorde peccati, humana augens, divina non minuens. *Epistles of Leo. Epistle xxiv, in some Editions x.*

deceived, admitted, there was no vestige of them in the Saviour?'

We have then the clear unequivocal testimony of two general councils against the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh. There is another council to which I would gladly refer, but I can find no copy of its anathemas. I mean the *fifth* general council, which was held at Constantinople. The reader who has the opportunity of consulting these anathemas will find it decreed in one of them, (the *thirteenth* I believe, but am not sure,) that Christ is to be worshipped according to both his natures, with one and the same adoration. It was to this council that the emperor Justinian presented his celebrated confession of faith. In that confession he has embodied a number of anathemas against various heresies. One of these anathemas is directed against Theodore of Mopsuesta, and among a variety of opinions attributed to him, I find the following condemned,—'That Christ suffered trouble from the passions of the mind, and from the desires of the flesh,'—'that by baptism he received the grace of the Holy Ghost,'—and 'that after the resurrection, he was made altogether immutable in his thoughts, and impeccable.' Now every one of these tenets is intimately connected with the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, and may be found openly avowed in the pages of some of the defenders of that doctrine. That neither that doctrine nor these tenets formed any portion of the Christian faith, nor were to be named but with

an anathema, the emperor Justinian and the council of Constantinople are very competent witnesses.

I now pass on to the testimonies of individual writers. I shall make my selections from them much less copious than I originally intended, because after the multiplied and overwhelming proofs of the utter abhorrence in which the tenet of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh was held by the primitive Christians, and of the entire abrogation of all that they held sacred, which the adoption of that tenet would have produced, which are furnished by that slight and rapid view of some of the principal heresies with which they had to contend, which I have given ; and by the decisive testimony of several general councils which I have produced ; I feel that to carry out the exhibition of individual testimonies to the extent which I at first designed, is totally unnecessary. To all who are free to form an impartial conclusion, from the evidence laid before them on the subject, the evidence that the primitive church did not, and could not, believe in the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, is already more than sufficient. I shall however exhibit, within as short a compass as I can, the views entertained by the writers of the first *four* centuries, simply premising these two things,—first, that I in no instance give a quotation which I have not myself copied from the place from which it professes to be taken ; and second, that I give no quotation from an author without meaning it to be understood, that, to the best of my judgment, that

quotation is a fair representation of the general sentiments of the author quoted, upon the subject. To this remark there are two exceptions, Hippolytus and Eustathius, my quotations from whom are taken from the fragments of their works preserved by Theodoret. I have no doubt whatever that their sentiments were in perfect unison with those of the whole Church, with regard to our Lord's humanity; but my acquaintance with their writings is too slight to enable me to vouch for this on my own personal knowledge. The reader who has the opportunity, is earnestly requested in every instance to turn to the quotations, in the original, when, if I mistake not, he will find them still stronger than in the detached form in which I have necessarily given them.

I begin with BARNABAS, the eldest of the Apostolical Fathers, a name familiar to the readers of the New Testament. Referring, in chapter vi. to the text, "Behold I lay in Zion a sure foundation stone," he says, 'Does our hope rest upon a stone then? Far from it; but because the Lord placed his flesh in power, for he saith, I have placed myself as a solid rock.'<sup>1</sup> There is some ambiguity here, as *ἐθήκα* may be understood in two different senses;

<sup>1</sup> *Ἐπὶ λίθον οὖν ἡμῶν ἡ ἐλπίς; μὴ γενοίτο· ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἐν ἰσχύει ἐθήκε τὴν σὰρκα αὐτοῦ ὁ Κύριος· λέγει γὰρ, καὶ ἐθήκα με ὡς σέρεαν πέτραν.* The reference here is to Isaiah l. 7, where the Septuagint has *ἐθήκα το προσωπον μου ὡς σέρεαν πέτραν* where Barnabas has understood *προσωπον μου* as just equivalent to *με*; and that, as appears from the preceding member of the sentence, is just equivalent to *σάρκα*.

but the sentence cannot be understood in any sense consistent with a belief, that our Lord died by the common property of flesh to die, because it was accursed in the loins of our first parents. What follows is very fanciful,—as indeed is the whole epistle,—but it is to the same purpose. He finds the Incarnation of our Lord to be expressed by the entrance of Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey. His argument is, that man is just earth endued with sensation, and that our Saviour entering into this earth, entered into a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. His language, after quoting one of the texts which refer to the land flowing with milk and honey, is—‘Learn what knowledge saith: Hope in Jesus who is to be manifested to you in the flesh. For man is earth endued with sensation; for of the substance of the earth was Adam formed. What then saith it? Into a land flowing with milk and honey. Blessed be our Lord who giveth to us wisdom, and the understanding of his hidden things.’<sup>1</sup> A little after, having quoted Gen. i. 26, he adds,—‘Then the Lord seeing man his fair workmanship, he saith, ‘Increase and multiply and replenish the earth.’ These things he saith to the Son.’ *Ιαυλα προς τον υιον*. In chapter viii., speaking of the ashes of the burnt heifer, he says,—‘But why was the wool placed upon wood? Because the

<sup>1</sup> Τι λεγει η γνωσις, μαθετε· ελπισατε επι τον εν σαρκι μελλοντα φανερουσθαι υμιν Ιησουν. Ανθρωπος γη εσι πασχουσα απο προσωπου γαρ της γης η πλασις του Αδαμ εγενετο. Τι ουν λεγει; Την γην την αγαθην, την ρεουσαν γαλα και μελι.



kingdom of Jesus was upon wood,' namely upon the cross.<sup>1</sup>

From these passages,—and he who looks into the original will see, that by detaching them from their contest, I have unavoidably weakened them,—it is perfectly clear that the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, and his consequent liability to death, equally with, and upon the same grounds as other men, is a doctrine which Barnabas had probably never heard of, and certainly did not believe. I may remark too, that however fanciful may be considered his understanding earth to mean the flesh of our Lord, we shall see in the sequel, that one of the ablest writers of antiquity, Ambrose of Milan, introduces the same idea, and if possible in a still more fanciful manner. I may remark farther, that in chapter vi. we find the first traces of a sentiment that afterwards became a favourite one among the Fathers, namely, that as Adam was formed of virgin earth, which had not yet been violated by the hand of cultivation; even so the second Adam was formed of a virgin mother. This sentiment we often meet with in the writings of the Fathers. I do not recollect if this fact has been adverted to, by those who have laboured to establish the genuineness of the epistle. It may however very well be urged for this purpose; and it may be still more strongly urged as a proof that they who used it believed that our Lord differed

<sup>1</sup> Οἷ δὲ το ἐριον ἐπὶ το ξηλον; ὅτι ἡ βασιλεια τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ το ξυλω.

in his humanity from us as widely, and on the same grounds, as unfallen Adam differed from his fallen posterity.

There is a passage in *Hermas*, whose name is also recorded in the New Testament, which clearly enough discovers his opinion upon the subject ; but after having extracted it, I have mislaid it, nor is it worth while to waste much time in seeking for it. Should it fall in my way, I shall give it in a note. In the meantime I pass on to **CLEMENT OF ROME**, whose name also is honoured by being recorded in one of Paul's Epistles.<sup>1</sup> He wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians, for the purpose of healing the unhappy divisions, which, it appears, still continued to agitate the Church there, notwithstanding all that the Apostle Paul had written. In merely enforcing the necessity of peace,—which he does just in such a manner as we would expect from a man honourably mentioned by the Apostle,—he has little opportunity of giving any opinion upon the subject of the present inquiry. But besides some passages in which his belief in the pre-existence of Christ is clearly, though incidentally shewn, there is one passage from which we may very well understand what he thought of our Lord's humanity. It occurs in Chap. ii. and is as follows, —‘Ye were all of a lowly mind ; not puffed up ;

<sup>1</sup> Grotius disputes this, and thinks the Clement mentioned by Paul, Philip. iv. 3, was a different person from Clement of Rome. I think he is wrong ; but the thing is not worth disputing about.

subject rather than subjecting others ; rather giving than receiving ; contented with the provision of God, and carefully keeping his words ; having your hearts enlarged, and *his sufferings* were before your eyes.’<sup>1</sup> Here Clement distinctly mentions the sufferings of God. But it was taught by all antiquity, and indeed must be admitted by every man, that the divinity in Christ could not suffer. It was the manhood alone that suffered, and yet what suffered is, by Clement, called God. He has also the clearest Scripture authority for this mode of expression ; for there we are told that the blood shed on the cross was the blood of God ; that he who was crucified was “ the Lord of glory ; ” and he who was killed was “ the Prince of life.” Could Clement possibly conceive that when he spoke, in perfect accordance with Scripture precedent, of the sufferings of God, that God was also, not merely a real man, else he could not have suffered at all, but a man suffering in fallen, sinful, wicked flesh ? It is so painful, so very revolting to the mind, even to place two such ideas in juxta-position, that we may well conclude that he had no conception of the sinfulness of our Lord’s humanity, when he spoke of the sufferings of God.

As a farther illustration of the meaning of the

<sup>1</sup> Παντες γε ελαπεινοφρονειτε, μηδεν αλαζονευομενοι, υποτασσομενοι μαλλον η υποτασσοντες, μαλλον διδοντες η λαμβανοντες, τοις εφοδιοις του θεου αρκουμενοι, και προσεχοντες τους λογους αυτου επιμελως, εσερνισμενοι ητε τοις σπλαγχνοις, και τα παθηματα αυτου ην προ οφθαλμων υμων.

passage, I may remark that Doctor Priestley is perfectly shocked with it, and therefore has recourse to his usual expedient on such occasions, calling its genuineness in question. It is very foolish to deny the genuineness of any passage in an ancient author, just because we do not like it. And this is Priestley's only reason, excepting, what just amounts to the same thing, that Junius thought that it should be not *παθημαλα αυτου* but *μαθημαλα αυτων*, that is, instead of sense, it should be nonsense. There is not the slightest ground for supposing that Clement did not write the passage as it stands. But even if there were, even if it were certain that he never wrote these words, what is gained by the admission? It cannot at least be denied that somebody wrote them, and thought that he was improving the Epistle by writing them; the Epistle containing them has always been held in the highest estimation; and they are incapable of being reconciled either to that system which denies the Divinity of Christ, or to that which maintains the sinfulness of his humanity.

I may here introduce some extracts from the Apostolical Constitutions, which are usually joined with the Epistle of Clement. There is not the shadow of a reason for ascribing the work to him; but as the time when, and the author by whom it was written cannot be ascertained, I may as well introduce it here as elsewhere. In one place where the writer represents the Apostles as giving a regular detail of the circumstances attending the death of our Lord,

he makes them say,—‘ All which things when the malefactors who were crucified with him saw, the one of them indeed blasphemed, as if Christ through weakness had been unable to help himself. But the other rebuked his ignorance, and turning to the Lord, as one enlightened by him, and knowing who he was that suffered, he prayed that he would remember him in his kingdom after these things : and the Lord immediately granting him forgiveness for the past, carried him into Paradise, to the enjoyment of mystic blessings.’<sup>1</sup> Here that it was through no want of power that Christ did not step down from the cross, and consequently that his death, at the moment when it took place, was perfectly voluntary, is taught in the plainest terms.

In another place they say,—‘ He was baptized and fasted ; not that he had need of any washing away of filth, or of fasting, or of purification, who was by nature pure and holy ; but that he might testify the truth of John, and furnish an example to us.’<sup>2</sup> They knew not that by baptism he was anointed as our Prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀπερ' ἀπάνια θρασυμένοι ὅς τις αὐτοθνήσκῃς αὐτῷ κακοῦργοι· ὁ μὲν αὐτῶν ἐβλάσφημει, ὥσπερ δι' ἀσθενείαν μὴ δυναμένον ἐαυτῷ ἐπαμεινῆν· ὁ δὲ ἰουὶ μὲν ἀγνοίαν ἐπέλιμα, πρὸς δὲ τὸν Κυρίον σφραγεῖς, ὡς ἀν' φάτισ-  
θεις ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ γινῶς ὅτις ὁ πάσχων, ἤξιον μνημὴν αὐτοῦ γενεσθῆναι  
ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ εἰς τὰ μεία ταῦτα· ὁ δὲ εὐθύς ἀμνησίαν αὐτῷ τῶν προγε-  
γονότων χάρισσάμενος, εἰς παραδείσον εἰσηγάγεν, ἀπολαύσαντα τῶν μυστικῶν  
ἀγαθῶν. *Book V. Chap. xiv.*

<sup>2</sup> Ἐβαπτίσθη δὲ καὶ ἐνηστεύεν· οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυπνώσεως ἡ νηστείας  
χρεῖαν ἔχων, ἡ καθάρσεως ὅ τῃ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος· ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ  
Ἰωάννη ἀληθείαν πρὸς μαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν υπογραμμὸν παρατμήσῃ.  
*Book VII. Chap. xxii.*



The Clementine Homilies, and the Recognitions, are still more palpable forgeries, and are full of heresies. Yet upon this subject, if they were worth quoting, they would be found as far from admitting the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity as possible.

Leaving them, therefore, I proceed to IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch. There is a tradition that he was the child whom our Saviour took and set in the midst of his Apostles, when he inculcated the lesson of humility upon them. Whatever credit may be due to this tradition, we have at least no reason to question the truth of his own declaration, when he says, that he saw our Lord after his resurrection from the dead. The passage to which I refer occurs in the Epistle to the Smyrneans, chap. iii. I do not quote it, for it would lead me into a longer comment than I can here afford space for ; but one thing it proves most distinctly, that he conceived the body which our Lord shewed to his disciples after his resurrection, and desired them to handle that they might be convinced of its reality, was the very same unchanged body which had hung upon the cross, and lay in the tomb. If he held the flesh of our Lord to be sinful during his life, it is certain that he held it to be equally so, after his resurrection. I think he was right in this respect ; but I avoid the discussion now, curious and important though it be, for the same reason that I avoided it in the first part of my work, that full justice cannot be done to it

without a larger discussion than can be given to it in such a treatise.

In the first chapter of his first Epistle, which is to the Ephesians, he speaks of 'the blood of God,' saying, 'being followers of God, greatly animating yourselves by the blood of God.'<sup>1</sup> Here what is peculiarly an affection of the man is ascribed to God. But then he has the most direct Scripture authority for this mode of speaking. For it is a rule which can never be too carefully inculcated, upon this subject, that whatever may be said of the flesh of Christ, may with perfect propriety be said of Christ. The early writers go farther, and apply to God whatever terms are applicable to the flesh of Christ. It was the flesh only that could bleed, yet that blood was the blood of God. It was the flesh alone that could die, yet the "Prince of life" died. It was the flesh alone that could be affixed to the cross, yet the "Lord of glory" was crucified. On the same ground, if it be Christian language to say that the flesh of Christ was fallen, sinful, wicked flesh, guilty and alienated from God, inclined to all forbidden things, and in bondage to the devil, the world, and the flesh; then may all these things be with equal propriety said of Christ and of God. I have not hitherto insisted on carrying out this rule to its full extent, because I had no occasion so to do, and knew that the primitive writers would carry it out for me to that extent. Now when we find Clement speaking

<sup>1</sup> μιμηταὶ οὐλὲς θεοῦ, ἀναζωπυρησαντὲς ἐν αἵματι θεοῦ.

of the sufferings of God, and Ignatius of the blood of God, and recollect how clearly such language is authorized by Scripture precedent; and when even they who maintain the sinfulness of Christ's flesh fully admit, that what was born, and suffered, and died, was very God; we must surely feel ourselves compelled to admit that what was fallen, sinful, wicked, and impure, was also very God; or to reject the application of such terms to Christ, or to a part of Christ, as the most direct and revolting blasphemy that any heresy has yet produced.

A rule constantly observed by the inspired writers, and from them followed by every Catholic writer; and a rule of the utmost importance in all theological speculations, is this,—If there be any one term, however innocent it may be, which may be properly applied to the humanity of Christ, but cannot be applied to Christ, or even to God, then that humanity was a person distinct from Christ and from God.

The nineteenth chapter of the same epistle commences thus,—‘The prince of this world knew not of the virginity of Mary, nor of her child-bearing, nor of the death of the Lord; three mysteries to be preached, which were accomplished by the power of God.’<sup>1</sup> It is necessary that I should give some account of a translation that deviates so widely from

<sup>1</sup> Καὶ ἐλάτρε τον αρχοντα τον αιωνος τουτου ἡ παρθενια Μαρίας, καὶ ὁλοκελος αυτης, ὁμοιως καὶ ὁ θανατος του Κυριου, τρια μυστηρια Κρανγγης, ἀλινα εν ἡσυχια θεου επραχθη. Literally, three mysteries of a cry, which were accomplished in the silence of God. *Tria mysteria clamoris, quæ in silentio Dei patrata sunt*, is the translation of Cotelerius.

the letter. As to *μυστηρια κραυγης*, I have been guided simply by conjecture; for if it do not mean mysteries that are to be openly preached, I cannot discover any meaning that it has at all. In translating *ἡσυχια θεου*, the power of God, I have gone upon better grounds. Cotelierius refers to the treatise ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, on the Divine Names, chapter ii. There the *ἡσυχια* of God is stated to be just the same as his *αφθεγξια* or his *ακινησια*, his silence or his immoveableness; and the application of these terms is simply intended to convey an idea of the perfect power of God. He goes not forth to any work, but in the performance of the mightiest works, he speaks not, he moves not; he simply wills and they are done, done *εν ἡσυχια θεου*.<sup>1</sup> Or as there seems to be an intended antithesis in the words *κραυγης* and *ἡσυχια*, the meaning may be that these three mysteries are now to be openly preached, though God kept them secret from the Prince of this world; a sense which agrees well with the beginning of the sentence.

<sup>1</sup> The verb *ἡσυχάζω* occurs in Irenæus, Lib. iii. Cap. 21, in a sense I conceive similar to that which Dionysius states to belong to the noun. 'For as he was man that he might be tempted, so he was the Word that he might be glorified, *ἡσυχάζοντος μεν του λογου*, the Word being silent in his being tempted, crucified, and dying.' Fevardentius says that this teaches that the Divinity did not suffer. This no doubt it does very clearly teach; but I am inclined to think it teaches more, namely that in his sufferings and death the manhood was sustained by the Word in whose person it subsisted, till he had endured all that the Law required, and was by the same power carried into the dominions of death,—that as the mightiest works are performed *εν ἡσυχια θεου*, even so the mighty works wrought on the cross, when Satan was cast down and death destroyed, were

But whatever sense may be attached to the latter part of the sentence, it is principally for the fact stated in the beginning of it, and in which there is no ambiguity, that I quote it,—namely, the ignorance of Satan with regard to the birth and character of Christ, and the effect of his death. This sentiment is taken up, I might almost say, by all the Fathers, and by some of them dwelt upon at much length, in explaining the doctrine of the Incarnation. They tell us that it was necessary that Christ should be born of a virgin; for had he been born of a married woman, there might have been some ground to suspect that he was descended from Adam by ordinary generation, and consequently must have been a fallen man. It was necessary, however, that that virgin should be espoused, that the Jews might not stone her, according to their law; and that she and her child might have a legal protector; but above all, that Satan might not know any thing of his birth. Their idea was, that had Satan known that Jesus Christ was the Incarnate Word, he never would have ventured to attack him at all: he would

wrought *εν ήσυχια του λογου*. When death met with one whom he could not conquer and lead a captive into his dominions,—one whom not only he could not carry captive into his dominions, but one who could enter into these dominions at his pleasure,—when he met one whom he could not slay, but who yet could die when he pleased, then did he learn that he had a master, that he held the keys of his own kingdom only by a delegated power. And he who accomplished this mighty work was the “woman’s seed,” truly the Son of Man, but he accomplished it *ήσυχάζοντος του λογου*. Others may entertain a different view of the force of this word in Irenæus, and therefore though I have thought it worth while to note it in passing, I build nothing upon it.



never have assaulted him, and therefore never could have been defeated : he never would have plotted his death, and therefore death never could have been destroyed. One of the grand purposes, therefore, and with some of the Fathers apparently the one grand purpose of Christ being incarnate of an espoused virgin was that the prince of this world might not know him, and thus might not be deterred from assailing him, and being overcome. This concealment from Satan of the person of Christ, by his being born of an espoused virgin, is here stated by Ignatius ; and the opinion is adopted by almost all the Fathers, and Ignatius referred to as its first promulgator by several of them. To make particular quotations on this subject would be endless, for no man can have entered even slightly into the Fathers without meeting the notion, that the flesh of Christ was just a bait to entice Satan to attack him. Thus Gregory Nyssen, treating the subject at some length, says, that Satan, ‘gaping after the bait of the flesh, was transfixed by the hook of the Divinity, and thus the dragon was drawn out with a hook, as Job says.’<sup>1</sup> And Basil, assigning the reasons why Christ was born of a married virgin, gives this as a reason assigned *τινι των παλαιων* by some one of the ancients, and referring, as nobody doubts, to this very passage of Ignatius, that her virginity might be concealed from the prince of this world ; and he adds that Satan was a great observer of

<sup>1</sup> In his Catechetical Oration, Chap. xxiv.

virgins, as he knew that a virgin was to have a son, who was to destroy his kingdom; but Mary being married, he ceased to watch her, fearing no harm from the offspring of any married woman.<sup>1</sup> One passage in which Bernard, the last of the Fathers, introduces this idea, is not only so very pertinent to the object which I have in view, but altogether so fine, that I am tempted to give it entire. ‘Therefore whom he sought in the flesh, he loved in the spirit, and redeemed by his power. It is truly delightful to see the Maker of man become a man. But while he prudently selected the nature apart from its pollution, he also powerfully repelled death from the nature. In the assumption of flesh he condescended to me; in avoiding its pollution, he attended to himself; in the undertaking of death he satisfied the Father; a delightful friend, a prudent counsellor, a powerful helper. To him I can securely commit myself, who wishes to save me, who knows how to save me, who is able to save me. Whom he sought, him he called by his grace; and will he cast out any that comes to him? Nay, I fear neither any force nor fraud, as if it could pluck me out of the hand of him who conquered death the conqueror of all; and by a holier art, deluded the serpent the seducer of all; more wise than the latter, more powerful than the former. He assumed indeed the reality of flesh, but the likeness of sin; affording by the first a sweet consolation to the weak, and by the last concealing

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xxv. εἰς τὴν ἀγιαστὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεννησιν.

the deceptive snare from the devil.'<sup>1</sup> Ruffinus also, in his exposition of the creed enters largely into the same view, shewing how through the bait of the flesh Satan was caught by the hook of the Divinity, and the dragon was drawn out with a hook. But it would be endless to refer to all the Fathers who adopt this idea. And when we find the Fathers, from Ignatius, one of the first of them, down to Bernard, the last of them, teaching that one great reason why Christ put on the likeness of sinful flesh, was that Satan might be encouraged to make that attack upon him as if he had been a fallen man, which was necessary to his own defeat, and which they conceive he never would have made, had he known that Jesus Christ was no fallen man, but the Incarnate Word ; can we believe that they at the same time held the doctrine that he was really a fallen sinful man, whom Satan might assail with a reasonable prospect of prevailing over him ; since being liable to temptation he must have been liable

<sup>1</sup> Itaque quos in carne quæsit, dilexit in Spiritu, redemit in virtute. Plenum prorsus omni suavitatis dulcedine, videre hominem hominis Conditionem. At dum naturam prudenter selegit a culpa, etiam potenter mortem propulit a natura. In carnis assumptione condescendit mihi ; in culpæ vitiatione consulit sibi ; in mortis susceptione satisfacit Patri ; amicus dulcis, consiliarius prudens, adjutor fortis. Huic securus me credo, qui salvare me velit, noverit, possit. Quem quæsit hunc et vocavit per gratiam suam, numquid venientem ejiciet foras ? Sed nec vim nec fraudem metuo profecto ullam, quod me videlicet de manu ejus possit eruere, qui et vincentem omnia vicit mortem, et seductorem universitatis serpentem arte utique sanctiore delusit, isto prudentior, illa potentior. Carnis quidem assumit veritatem, sed peccati similitudinem, dulcem prorsus in illa exhibens consolationem infirmo, et in hac prudenter abscondens laqueum deceptionis diabolo. *Supra Cantica. Sermo 20.*

to sin, without which liability temptation is declared to be no temptation? I could just as easily believe that no such writers as the Fathers ever existed.

The epistles of Ignatius abound in passages against the Docetæ who denied the reality of our Lord's body; and in every one of which he not only might have been expected to maintain the sinfulness of his flesh, as earnestly and emphatically as that doctrine is inculcated now, when there is so much less reason for insisting upon it; but, had he believed the doctrine, must of necessity have done so. There is no possibility of acquitting him of the charge of great ignorance of the doctrines which he had learned from the lips of the Apostles themselves, nay, even from the lips of Christ himself, or of grievous unfaithfulness, in neglecting to inculcate so important a doctrine as the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh is represented to be, when writing in circumstances that so imperiously required it to be brought forward in the most distinct and prominent manner. Still less can he be excused for teaching the very contrary, and being the first to promulgate an error upon the Incarnation which misled all that followed him, down even to the last of the Fathers, nay, down to the present day. I had marked a number of other portions for extraction, but I find that I cannot produce them without allowing to him a very disproportionate space. I shall therefore merely notice a mistake that occurs in the *vetus interpretatio* of his interpolated Epistle to the Trallians, chap. x. The passage is—

*Crucifixus est vere, voluntarie complacens, non phantastice.* This is the translation of εἰς αὐτῶν αἰγιῶς, οὐ δοκῇσιν, οὐ φαντασία. It is clear that the ancient translator, instead of οὐ δοκῇσιν, he died not in appearance only, had read εὐδοκῇσιν he died of his own good pleasure. Now admitting him to have been mistaken, as he probably was, yet he must have detected his mistake at once, if the reading which he adopted conveyed a sense not merely new to the church, but grossly heretical. But the mistake passed without detection, because if Ignatius teaches not that doctrine in this place,—which indeed is none of his writing—he teaches it clearly enough elsewhere.

Of POLYCARP, the disciple of the apostle John, and the last of the apostolical Fathers, we have left only one short epistle to the Philippians, It is worthy of its venerable author, but I observe nothing in it particularly bearing upon the subject. I pass on therefore to his contemporary JUSTIN MARTYR, who flourished about the middle of the second century, and suffered martyrdom in the year 166. I need not make many extracts from him, in order to shew what were his opinions as to the person of Christ, as he has the honour of being reproached by the Socinians, as the first of the Fathers who taught the Divinity of our Lord. In his Second Apology, page 76, he understands the text, “The government shall be upon his shoulders,” as referring to the cross which our Saviour carried upon his shoulders. Bar-



nabas had done the same before him, as others of the Fathers did after him; for they imagined not that he was overcome on the cross, but that there he reigned.

In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he quotes the text, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> Trypho admits that this text refers to the Messiah, and immediately proceeds to draw from it an objection against the Divinity of Christ, in this manner,—‘You say that he pre-existed as God, and you say that according to the counsel of God, he was incarnated, and born as man of a virgin. How can *his* pre-existence be proved, who is filled with the powers of the Holy Spirit which the Word enumerates by Isaiah, as one who stands in need of them?’ Now let any one who believes that our Lord took fallen sinful flesh, just consider with himself for one moment how he would answer this objection. He will find that his answer is perfectly ready. He would reply at once that Christ really did stand in need of these powers of the Holy Spirit; that having in his Incarnation taken fallen sinful flesh, he had in him all the evil propensities of fallen

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xi. 1.

man, and being continually inclined to all forbidden things, he required the constant control of the Holy Spirit, without which he would have broken forth into actual crime. Had Justin held this doctrine, he could have given no other answer. He must have admitted at once that Christ did need those powers. Yet, instead of making this admission, he gives an answer which will meet with the approbation of neither those who admit, nor of those who deny that tenet. His reply is,—‘ You have put this question with great acuteness and skill ; for there really does seem to be some ground of doubt here. But that you may understand this, attend to what I say. The Word does not say that the powers of the Spirit which are mentioned, came upon him as if he stood in need of them ; but that they were to *rest* upon, that is, to have their termination in him, so that there should be no more prophets among your people, according to the ancient manner ; and this you may see with your own eyes, for after him no prophet hath arisen among you.’<sup>1</sup> Now with such an answer to

<sup>1</sup> ..... Καὶ θεὸν αὐτὸν προὔπαρχοντα λέγεις, καὶ κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντα αὐτὸν λέγεις διὰ τῆς παρθενοῦ γεγενῆσθαι ἀνθρώπον· πῶς δύναται ἀποδειχθῆναι προὔπαρχων, ὅστις διὰ τῶν δυνάμεων τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, ἅς καταρτίζει ὁ λόγος διὰ ἡσαιοῦ, πληροῦται, ὡς ἐνδεὴς τοῦτων ὑπαρχων ; κἀγὼ ἀπεκρίναμεν, νουνεχέστατα μὲν καὶ συνήλωτατα ἠρώησας· ἀληθῶς γὰρ ἀπορρημα δοκεῖ εἶναι· ἀλλ’ ἵνα ἰδῇς καὶ τὸν περὶ τοῦτων λόγον, ἀκούε ὧν λέγω, ταύτας τὰς κατήριθμμενας τοῦ πνεύματος δυνάμεις, οὐχ ὡς ἐνδεοὺς αὐτοῦ τοῦτων οὐτος, φησὶν ὁ λόγος ἐπεληλυθῆναι ἐπ’ αὐτὸν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνον ἀναπαυσὶν μέλλοντων ποιεῖσθαι, τοῦτες, ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ περας ποιεῖσθαι τοῦ μηκέτι ἐν τῷ γενεῖ ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν ἔθος προφητῆς γενήσεσθαι· ὅπερ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἰδεῖν ἐστὶ· μετ’ ἐκεῖνον γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὅλως προφητῆς παρ’ ὑμῶν γεγενῆται. Page 314. Edition of Paris 1636.

such an objection before our eyes, is it in any man's power to believe that Justin held the doctrine of the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity? held that Christ needed regeneration, and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit just as much as we do? It is perfectly clear that Justin's views upon the subject were very vague and unsatisfactory; but it is no less clear that they were directly opposed to the tenet of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh.

He is quite scandalized at the idea that Christ was made a curse for us; and labours to shew that as God was blameless, though he ordered Moses to make a brazen serpent, the very last thing that it might have been expected that a God who had forbidden all images, would have ordered, 'even so though a curse be denounced in the law against men that are crucified, that curse does not lie against the Christ of God.'<sup>1</sup> Did this writer, who, in defiance of the direct assertion of the Apostle, denied that Christ was made a curse for us, yet believe that he actually took fallen sinful flesh, which had been accursed in the loins of our first parents?

The next author who demands our attention is IRENÆUS, who was ordained bishop of Lyons some time before the year 180, and suffered martyrdom in the second or third year of the *third* century.

<sup>1</sup> ..... ὁ γὰρ καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καταρα κεῖται καὶ τῶν  
 σαυρανμένων ἀνθρώπων, οὐκ ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ κατα τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταρα  
 κεῖται. Page 322.

He has left us one of the most valuable works of antiquity, written against all the heresies of the time; the greater part of which however exists only in a Latin translation, which I should conjecture from the style, was made by some person who was a native of Greece, as Irenæus himself was. He was a disciple of Polycarp who was ordained bishop of Smyrna by the Apostle John. We have already seen him arguing against the Gnostics, that there can be nothing in flesh and blood unfit for the kingdom of heaven; and arguing thus, upon this very ground that the apostle Paul applies the terms flesh and blood to Christ himself. This is a proof as satisfactory as can be desired that he utterly denied the doctrine that even the flesh of Christ himself was fallen sinful flesh. As far therefore as the proof of this point is concerned, any thing farther might be unnecessary. But he entertains a view upon the subject so singular, though not quite peculiar to himself, that I should be doing injustice to the subject were I to pass it unnoticed. His view is, that Adam was made the image of God indeed, but not the perfect image of him. He was rather the reflected image, the image of that humanity of our Lord, which was the only perfect human image of God that ever existed. His constant doctrine is, that man never was truly the image of God till the Incarnation. God could have made man perfectly so at first, but man, being yet in his infancy, was not fit for this distinction. But in Christ man became perfectly the

image of God. In proof of this I would refer particularly to Lib. iv. Cap. 75, and 76. I quote the following from Lib. v. Cap. 16, because though it does not enter so particularly into the subject, it is sufficiently distinct, and is much shorter,—‘In past times it was said indeed, that man was made in the image of God; but that was not shewn. For as yet the Word was invisible, after whose image man had been made. On this account also he easily lost the likeness. But when the Word of God was made flesh, he established both: for he both shewed the true image, he himself becoming what his image was; and restored the likeness confirming it, making man like the invisible Father by the visible Word. And the Lord not only manifested both the Father and himself by the things aforesaid, but also by his passion itself, he dissolved the disobedience in a tree, by obedience unto death upon a tree.’<sup>1</sup> Here the inferiority even of unfallen Adam to the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ is distinctly stated. It was not until the Incarnation of the Word that a perfect human image of God was seen: and it was not till then that that image was placed beyond the possibility of falling. The reason of this inferiority he treats

<sup>1</sup> In præteritis enim temporibus, dicebatur quidem secundum imaginem Dei factum esse hominem, non autem ostendebatur. Adhuc enim invisibile erat Verbum, cujus secundum imaginem homo factus fuerat. Propter hoc autem et similitudinem facile amisit. Quando autem caro Verbum Dei factum est, utraque confirmavit: et imaginem ostendit veram, ipse hoc fiens, quod erat imago ejus; et similitudinem firmans restituit, consimilem faciens hominem invisibili Patri per visibile Verbum.



of in the chapters to which I have referred, and employs the text, "I have fed you with milk, and not with strong meat," to shew that Adam, even in his unfallen state was not capable of being the true and perfect image of God,—an image which was never seen till the Word was made flesh.

Instead, however, of making an extract from either of these chapters, I prefer quoting a passage from Theophilus, who was ordained bishop of Antioch in the year 170, a writer who was the first that made use of the word 'Trinity.' Theophilus and Irenæus wrote so nearly at the same time, and lived at such a distance from each other, that it is not probable that the one could borrow from the other; yet he who reads the chapters in Irenæus to which I have referred, will probably be inclined to think, that in proving the inferiority of unfallen Adam to the humanity of Christ, he had before him the following passage from Theophilus:—'The tree of knowledge was good, and its fruit was good. For the tree bore not, as some imagine, any thing noxious or deadly; but disobedience was the cause of death. For there was nothing in the fruit, save knowledge alone. But knowledge is good, if one knows how to use it properly. But Adam was at that time an infant, and was therefore unable to receive knowledge in a worthy manner. For even now, when a child is born, he is not immediately able to eat bread, but is first nourished with milk, and at a more advanced age proceeds to more solid food: and so also it was

with Adam.’<sup>1</sup> Now Irenæus, in writing the chapters referred to, either had seen this language, or the sentiment was so common in the church at the time, that two different persons, the one writing at Antioch in the east, and the other writing at Lyons in the west, express the same opinion, and nearly in the same words. Priestley was right. It would be easier by far to prove that these writers were Gnostics, and denied the flesh of Christ altogether, than to prove that they held his flesh to be fallen and sinful. There is no writer whom I would more strongly recommend to the theological student upon the subject of the Incarnation than Irenæus. In the statement of his views as to the superiority of our Lord’s manhood to that of unfallen Adam, he no doubt does occasionally go somewhat farther than is perfectly warrantable; as when he speaks of the *mixture* of the humanity and divinity in Christ; a mode of speaking that he repeatedly employs, even though writing against the Gnostics. But then it must be remembered that this is a mode of speaking perfectly familiar with the Fathers, until the rise of the Eutychian heresy shewed its danger. And in the same way he uses language which might, if rigidly interpreted, be urged in favour of the opposite heresy of Nestorius. Thus in book iii. chap. 18. we have the following language :—‘ *Filius Dei hominis*

<sup>1</sup> Τη δε ουση ἡ λικια ὁ Ἀδαμ ἐν νηπιος ην, διο ουπω ηδυνατο την γνωσιν κατ’ αξιαν χωρειν. Και γαρ νυν, επαν γεννηθη παιδιον, ουκ ηδη δυναται αρτον εσθιειν, αλλα πρωτον γαλακτι αναλρεφειται, επειτα καλα προσθασιν τῆς ἡ λικιας, και επι την στερεαν τροφην ερχεται. Ουτως αν εγεγονει και τω Αδαμ. To Autolycus, Book ii.

*filius factus, ut per eum adoptionem percipiamus, portante homine, et capiente, et complectente Filium Dei.*' Now though this language be capable of a sound sense, yet it is only capable of that sense, while it naturally conveys an idea directly Nestorian ; and in truth I doubt not that could he at that time have had any idea of the Nestorian heresy, he would either have avoided the expression altogether, or would have written it thus :—*portante Filio Dei, et capiente, et complectente hominem.* Yet I may remark that in the interpolated epistles of Ignatius, epistle to the Trallians, chap. x. we meet a similar phraseology :—

Ἀληθῶς τοῖνον ἐγεννήσε Μαρία σῶμα, θεὸν ἐνοικοῦν ἐχόν, ' Many truly bore a body having God dwelling in it.' Every one sees that this language is most objectionable, and at a later period would not have been tolerated : but at the same time every intelligent reader sees clearly that the writer had no intention to teach the doctrine which might be fairly inferred from it. We must allow great latitude to those who wrote before heresies rising in the church, had called for the interference of general councils ; and the candid reader will at once admit that while they use language that might be urged in favour of Nestorianism, and far more frequently language that might be urged in favour of Eutychianism, they had not the most distant intention of teaching either the one or the other of these heresies. The best proof of this is, that these two opposite modes of expression may commonly be found in the same writer. In general the language

of Irenæus is as correct as his views are judicious. How far he was right in maintaining that our Lord, as to his humanity, was superior to unfallen Adam, I shall not stop to inquire. It is clear as day that he did not believe that our Lord's humanity was fallen, sinful, and impure.

The next author who demands our attention is CLEMENT, a presbyter and catechist in the church of Alexandria. When he was born is not known ; but he died in the year 220. His views as to our Saviour's humanity were by no means of a sound description. I must however produce a specimen of them, in order to shew how very far he was from thinking that humanity to be sinful. In one place he writes thus,—‘ Our pædagogus, O ye children, is like to God the Father whose Son he is, impeccable, irreprehensible, and in his soul impassible. He is unpolluted God in the figure of man, performing his Father's will ; God the Word, who is in the Father, and at the right hand of the Father, and together with the figure,—*of a man namely*,—God. He is to us the spotless image ; and with all our power must we labour to make our souls like to him. But he was perfectly free from all human passions. For this reason he alone is Judge, for he alone is impeccable.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Εἶοικεν δὲ ὁ Παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν, ὡ παιδὲς ἡμεῖς, τῷ Πατρὶ αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ, ὅπερ ἐστὶν υἱὸς ἀναμαρτήτος, ἀνεπλεπτός, καὶ ἀπαθὴς τῇ ψυχῇ. Θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώπου σχηματὶ ἀχραντός, πατρικῷ βέλγηματι διακονός, λόγος Θεός, ὁ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, ὁ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς, συν καὶ τῷ σχηματὶ Θεός.

In the same book, chap. vii. he speaks of the ‘holy God Jesus,’ ὁ ἅγιος θεὸς Ἰησοῦς. But the following passage will effectually put an end to all doubts as to what he thought of the sinfulness of our Lord’s flesh; and it is to be regretted that so impious a doctrine being urged upon the world, on this among other grounds, that all the Fathers teach it, renders necessary the production of passages, which it would be better by far to leave in the original where but few eyes could see them. After observing that the true Gnostic, that is, the Christian, (for while the Gnostics boasted loudly of their knowledge, and took their very name, from the word γνῶσις, Clement maintains that the Christian alone was the real Gnostic,) had no other affections than those which are necessary for the preservation of life, such as hunger, thirst and the like, he adds,—‘But as to the body of our Saviour, it would be ridiculous to suppose that, as a body, it required those things which are necessary for the preservation of life. He ate, not on account of his body, which was sustained by his holy power, but lest those who were conversant with him should imagine, as some afterwards did, that he was a man only in appearance. But he was totally exempted from all passion, and could experience no emotion whether of pleasure or of pain.’<sup>1</sup> This is

Οὗτος ἡμῖν εἰκὼν ἢ ἀκηλμδωτος· τούτω παντὶ σθένει πειρατεὸν ἐξομοιοῦν τὴν ψυχὴν. Ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν, ἀπολυτὸς εἰς τὸ καντελεῖς ἀνθρώπων παθῶν. Διὰ τούτω γὰρ καὶ μόνος κριτῆς, ὅτι ἀναμαρτήτος μόνος. *Padagogue.*  
Book I. Chap. ii. See Note M. Appendix.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ Σωτῆρος τὸ σῶμα, ἀπαιτεῖν ὡς σῶμα ἅτας ἀναγ-



one of the very passages produced by Priestley for the purpose of proving that even as to the humanity of our Lord, the Fathers held an opinion not materially differing from that of the Gnostics. Utterly indefensible as is the position of Priestley, it must be admitted that such language as this is equally indefensible, and enabled him to give but too plausible a colour to his assertion. No man in the present age, would, I suppose, make use of such language as this ; yet the church in the present age is charged with denying the flesh of Christ ; while at the same time it is asserted that all the Fathers, not only maintained the reality of that flesh, but believed it to be fallen, sinful flesh !

MARCUS MINUTIUS FELIX, a Roman lawyer, wrote a very elegant defence of Christianity, about the beginning of the *third* century. He has had no occasion to enter upon the question of our Lord's humanity ; but the following passing remark shews clearly enough his opinion upon the subject. It occurs a few pages from the end,—*‘Nam quod religioni nostræ hominem noxium, et crucem ejus adscribitis, longe de vicinia veritatis erratis, qui putatis Deum credi, aut meruisse noxium, aut potuisse terrenum :*

καιας ὑπηρεσιας εἰς διαμονην, γελως αν εἰη· εφαιγεν γαρ ου δια το σωμα, δυναμει συνεχομενον ἀγια· ἀλλ' ὡς μη τους συνοντας ἀλλως περι αυτον φρονειν ὑπεισελθοι· ὡσπερ ἀμελει ὑστερυν δοκησει τινες αυτον πεφανερωσθαι ὑπελαβον. αυτος δε ἀπαξαπιδως ἀπαθης ην, εἰς ὃν ουδεν παρεισδυεται κινημα παθητικον, ουτε ἡδουη, ουτε λυπη. Stromata, Book VI. Chap. ix.

*næ ille miserabilis, cujus in homine mortali spes omnis innititur ; totum enim ejus auxilium cum extincto homine finitur.'*

TERTULLIAN was a presbyter in the church of Carthage. He turned Montanist in 207, and died about 220. Having already given one testimony from him, as distinct as language can express, against the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, I shall content myself here with giving another short extract, in which he expressly guards against that tenet. He has written a treatise expressly on the flesh of Christ, which is truly excellent. The sixteenth chapter of that treatise he devotes to the defence of the Church against the reproach of believing the flesh of Christ to be sinful, as the Gnostics charged the catholics with doing. The title given to the chapter by Lacerda is—*Responsio pro Catholicis, quod caro vera Christi peccatrix non fuerit* ; that is, 'An answer for the Catholics, that the true flesh of Christ was not sinful.' The whole chapter is as direct to the purpose as possible. I shall produce merely the end of it. After observing that it would have been no great matter if Christ had removed the blot of sin in better flesh, and of another, that is not of a sinful nature, he proceeds as follows, —'Then, you will say, if he put on our flesh, the flesh of Christ was sinful. Do not strain the simple meaning ; in putting on our flesh, he made it his own ; making it his own, he made it not sinful. Finally, let those who think that Christ had not our

flesh, because he came not by ordinary generation, remember that Adam himself did not receive this flesh by ordinary generation. As earth was changed into this flesh without ordinary generation, even so the Word of God was able, without ordinary generation, to pass into the matter of the same flesh.’<sup>1</sup>

Of HIPPOLYTUS little is known. He was a bishop, but whether of Ostia in Italy, or of some city in Arabia is uncertain ;—most probably the latter. He suffered martyrdom in the year 230. As I have no other acquaintance with the writings of this author than what is derived from a very slight inspection while looking for passages bearing upon the present question, I have thought it best to lay aside the passages which I had extracted from him, and to substitute others taken from those fragments of his works which are preserved by Theodoret. The following is from his Sermon on the text—“The Lord is my shepherd.”—‘And the Saviour himself was an ark of wood that would not rot ; for by it his undecaying and incorruptible tabernacle was signified, which produced no corruption of sin. For he who sins, confesses, and says, ‘My wounds

<sup>1</sup> Ergo, inquis, si nostram induit, peccatrix fuit caro Christi. Noli constringere explicabilem sensum ; nostram enim induens, suam fecit ; suam faciens, non peccatricem eam fecit. Ceterum, (quod ad omnes dictum sit, qui ideo non putant carnem nostram in Christo fuisse, quia non fuit ex viri semine) recordentur Adam ipsum in hanc carnem, non ex semine viri factum. Sicut terra conversa est in hanc carnem sine viri semine, ita et Dei Verbum potuit sine coagulo in ejusdem carnis transire materiam. *De Carne Christi*, Cap. xvi. Edition of Priorius after Rigaltius.

stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness ;' but the Lord was impeccable, of wood that would not rot, according to his manhood, that is of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, overlaid within and without as with the most pure gold of God the Word.'<sup>1</sup> The following is from his Sermon on the two robbers,—'And the body being dead after a human manner, has yet a great power of life in it ; for things which flow not from dead bodies, flowed from it, blood and water, that we might know how far the power dwelling in the body prevails to life ; so that it might appear to be unlike other dead bodies, and able to pour out the causes of life to us.'<sup>2</sup> This passage of Hippolytus has been made use of to substantiate a charge of unsoundness against the Fathers. I have too slight an acquaintance with the general sentiments of Hippolytus to be able to undertake his defence ; but I have no doubt whatever that he was perfectly sound. It is quite clear however, from this language, that if he erred at all with regard

<sup>1</sup> Και κιβωτος δε εκ ξυλων ασηπτων αυτος ην ο Γωτηρ· το γαρ ασηπτον αυτον αδιαφθορον σκηνος ταυτη κατηγγελλετο, το μηδεμιαν αμαρτηματος σηπεδονα φυσαν. Ο' γαρ αμαρτησας, και εξομολογουμενος φησι, προσωξεσαν και εσαπησαν οι μολωπες μου απο προσωπου της αφροσυνης μου. Ο'δε Κυριος αναμαρτητος ην, εκ των ασηπτων ξυλων το κατ' ανθρωπον, τουτεσιν εκ της παρθενου και του αγιου πνευματος, εσωθεν και εξωθεν του λογου του θεου οιον καθαρωτατω χρυσω πεφικεκαλυμμενος. Eranistes of Theodoret, Dialogue I. p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Και νεκρον τε ον το σωμα κατα τον ανθρωπινον τροπον, μεγαλην εχει ζωης εν αυτω δυναμιν· α γαρ ου προχειται των νεκρων σωματος, ταυτα εξ αυτου προεχεθη, αιμα τε και ιδωρ· ιν' ειδειημεν ηλικον η κατασκηνωσασα δυναμις εν τω σωmati προς ζωην δυναται, ως μητε αυτο τοις αλλοις ομοιον φαινεσθαι νεκρον, ημιν δε τα ζωης αιτια προχειν δυνασθαι. Eranistes of Theodoret, Dialogue III. p. 156.

to our Lord's humanity, his error lay in a direction exactly opposite to that of those who maintain the sinfulness of that humanity. If he deviated from orthodoxy at all, it is clear that the deviation was in the direction not of Socinianism, but of Gnosticism;—a remark that may be made with regard to all the primitive writers.

We now come to ORIGEN, who, like his master, Clement, was a catechist and presbyterian in the church of Alexandria. He was born about the year 185, and died in 252. His opinions on several points were peculiar to himself. With regard to the Word and the Holy Ghost these opinions were not, in my opinion, quite so bad as they have been sometimes represented. They were, however, too bad to admit of any satisfactory defence. But with regard to the humanity of our Lord, it may naturally be expected that his views would partake somewhat of the character of those of his master Clement, who, as we have seen, furnished Priestley with one of his strongest authorities for accusing the primitive church of Gnosticism. The following passage will shew that with regard to the humanity of our Lord, he copied Clement but too closely. Referring to Celsus, one of whose objections as to the body of our Lord he was remarking upon, he says:—‘ But’ he saith, ‘ neither does the body of God eat such food as you do,’ just as if he could prove from the gospel that he did eat, or that he ate such food as we do. But be



it so that he did eat the passover with his disciples, and that he did not merely say, “with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you,” but that he actually did eat; let him say also that he drank at Jacob’s well; what has that to do with what we have said of his body? It clearly appears that after his resurrection he ate fish, for we believe that he took a body, being born of woman.<sup>1</sup> This passage is perfectly sufficient to shew how deeply Origen was imbued with the spirit of his master upon this subject; and how far he was from thinking the flesh of Christ to be fallen sinful flesh. Many extracts from the same justly-celebrated treatise, of a similar character, it would be easy to produce. One more I must give. Referring to the often-repeated objection of Celsus, that Christians thought it a pious thing to believe that Christ, consisting of a mortal body, was God, he says:—‘But let these accusers know, that this Jesus, whom from the beginning we believe to be God, and the Son of God, is the very Word, and the very truth, and the very wisdom; and as to his mortal body, and the human soul that was in it, we say that not only by the fellowship, but also

<sup>1</sup> Λεγει δε ‘ὅτι ουδε τοιαυτα σιτειται σωμα θεου’ ὡς εχων αυτον παρασσησαι απο των ευαγγελικων γραμματων σιτουμενον, και ποια σιτουμενον. Αλλ’ εγω, λεγω αυτον βεβρωκεναι μετα των μαθητων τυ πασχα’ ου μονον ειποντα το. ‘Επεδυμια επεδυμησα τουτο το πασχα φαγειν μεθ’ ἡμων,’ αλλα και βεβρωκοτα. Λεγω δ’ αυτον και διψησαντα παρα τη πηγη του Ιακωβ πεπωκεναι, τι τουτο προς τα περι του σωματος αυτου ὑψῶν λεγομενα; σαφως δε φαινεται ιχθυος μετα την αναστασιν βεβρωκως. Against Celsus. Book i. near the end p. 54 of Spencer’s edition. He alludes to what he had stated in a previous part of the same book, see particularly pp. 26 and 29.

by the union and mixture of the Word, it received all that is great; and by a participation of his Divinity, became God.’<sup>1</sup>

These passages are perfectly sufficient to shew that Priestley might have quoted Origen also in order to give a colour to the charge of Gnosticism, which he brings against the Fathers. I have at present no opportunity of consulting his work *περι αρχων*, but there is a collection of passages bearing on the Incarnation, selected from that work, and translated by Ruffinus, from which I may take a few sentences. Speaking of the human soul of Christ, he says,— ‘It was anointed with the oil of gladness then, when by an immaculate federation, it was united to the Word of God; and by this it alone of all human souls was incapable of sin, because it was well and fully capable of receiving the Son of God; and therefore it is one with him, and receives his names, and is called Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made.’ And he adds that he conceives that it is of this soul that the apostle says, “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” Again he remarks that as a mass of iron placed in a furnace, is said to be made fire, and appears so to the eye, and if any one try to touch or handle it, he will feel the force not of iron but of

<sup>1</sup> ‘Ὅμως δὲ ἰσῶσαν (ιδετῶσαν) οἱ ἐγκαλοῦντες, ὅτι ὃν μὲν νομίζομεν καὶ πεπεισμένῳ ἀρχήσθαι εἶναι θεὸν καὶ ἴσον θεοῦ, οὗτος ὁ αὐτολογὸς ἐστὶ, καὶ ἡ αὐτοσοφία, καὶ ἡ αὐταληθεία. τὸ δὲ ζῶντον αὐτοῦ σῆμα, καὶ τὴν ἀνθρώπινην ἐν αὐτῷ ψυχὴν, τῇ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο οὐ μόνον κοινωνία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει, τὰ μέγιστα φάμεν προσεῖληφέναι, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ζειότητος κεκοινωνηκότα εἰς θεὸν μεταβεβήκεναι. Against Celsus, Book iii. p. 135.

fire; 'in the same manner also that soul which, as iron in fire, is always placed in the Word, in the wisdom, in God; all that it does, all that it feels, all that it thinks, is God. And therefore it cannot be said to be convertible or mutable, but, unceasingly ignited by its union with the Word of God, will possess immutability.' This, as far as I know, is the first appearance of the simile drawn from the union of iron and fire, which was afterwards often used by the Fathers, and which is better known in modern times as the illustration which Luther used in support of his doctrine of consubstantiation. These extracts abundantly prove that whatever errors Origen held, the sinfulness of our Saviour's humanity was none of them. I regret to add that extracts might be made from his writings in support of some of the most irrational errors of the present day. Happily, that they were countenanced by Origen is not a circumstance that will tend much to promote them.

From Origen we pass to CYPRIAN who was bishop of Carthage, and suffered martyrdom in the year 258. Speaking of the Jews calling upon Pilate to put our Lord to death he says,—'That they would do this both he himself had foretold, and the testimony of all the preceding prophets was that he behoved to suffer, not that he might merely feel death, but that he might conquer it; and when he had suffered might return to life anew, that he might

shew the power of the divine majesty. And the event justified the prediction ; for both when he was crucified, anticipating the duty of the executioner, he of his own accord dismissed his spirit ; and again on the third day, he of his own accord rose from the dead. He appeared to his disciples as he had been before, and gave himself to be recognized by them, seeing him, and being joined with them, and conspicuous by the firmness of his corporeal substance, he remained with them forty days, that they might be instructed in his vital precepts, and learn what they should teach. Then he was taken up to heaven in a cloud, that he might victorious, carry to the Father the man whom he loved, whom he put on, and whom he protected from death ; about to come from heaven for the punishment of the devil, and the censure of the human race, with all the vigour of an avenger, and all the power of a judge.’<sup>1</sup> Here it is distinctly asserted that our Lord’s death was perfectly voluntary at the moment when it took place, an assertion in

<sup>1</sup> Hoc facturos et ipse prædixerat, et prophetarum omnium testimonium sic ante præceperat, oportere illum pati, non ut sentiret tantum mortem, sed ut vinceret: et cum passus esset, ad superos denuo regredi, ut vim divinæ majestatis ostenderet. Fidem itaque rerum cursus implevit: nam et crucifixus, prævento carnificis officio, spiritum sponte dimisit, et die tertio rursus a mortuis sponte surrexit. Apparuit discipulis suis ut antea fuerat, agnoscendum se videntibus præbuit, simul junctus et substantiæ corporalis firmitate conspicuus ad dies quadraginta remoratus est, ut de eo ad præcepta vitalia instrui possent, et discerent quæ docerent. Tunc in cælum circumfusa nube sublatus est, ut hominem quem dilexit, quem induit, quem a morte protexit ad Patrem victor imponeret; jam venturus e cælo ad pœnam diaboli, et ad censuram generis humani, ultoris vigore, et judicis potestate. *De Idolorum vanitate*, p. 297. Edition of Rigaltius. Paris 1666.

direct and irreconcilable opposition to the tenet that he had taken fallen, sinful flesh, and consequently died by the common property of flesh to die because it was accursed in the loins of our first parents. His language, toward the end of the extract assumes, it will be observed, a Nestorian character, but Nestorius had not then been heard of, and Cyprian is perfectly sound.

In his Testimonies of Scripture against the Jews, he quotes Psalms xiii. and xvi. and the text, “No man taketh my life from me,” in proof of the proposition, *Quod a morte non vinceretur, nec apud inferos mansurus esset*,—that is, ‘that he should not be conquered by death, nor should remain in the grave.’ p. 257.

GREGORY, bishop of Neo-Cesarea, commonly called Thaumaturgus, died in 265. There are twelve anathemas which are commonly attributed to this Father. Their genuineness has been called in question; but the only reason that I have seen assigned against them appears to me to be a very insufficient one. It is objected to them that they so plainly condemn the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches, that they must have been written after their times. But the fact is that these heresies, especially the former, had in one shape or another, harassed the Church from the beginning; and it has been distinctly shewn by several learned men, especially by Waterland on the Athanasian Creed, that Nestorianism had been



condemned by Catholic writers at least half a century before Nestorius was heard of. The proof may with great ease be carried up to a much earlier date. Nearly two hundred years before Nestorius, Paul of Samosata maintained the very same heresy, in a much grosser form. He argued that as the "form of a servant," which God is said to have assumed,—means a servant; and as the first of these had a distinct personal existence, so had the last. And what is this but a grosser form of Nestorianism? Now Gregory of Neo-Cesarea was one of the principal persons in the Council of Antioch, in which the tenets of Paul were condemned. I should think therefore that it was perfectly natural, that he should compose some anathemas condemnatory of Nestorian doctrines. And in looking into the anathemas it is quite evident that they are levelled against something much grosser than ever Nestorius held. For example, the *third* anathema is against those who say that Christ assumed a distinct man, as for example, one of the prophets, and not that he himself became man; and the *sixth* is against those who say that on the cross one suffered, and another remained impassible. Now these things Nestorius did not maintain, while Paul did. Clearly therefore as these anathemas condemn the Nestorian doctrine, I am very strongly inclined to think that it was against a much worse Nestorian than Nestorius ever was that they are levelled. Their clear condemnation of the Apollinarian heresy, I should consider a stronger

objection against them ; but that also might be met in the same manner. I cannot admit that the objection against their genuineness has the slightest weight.

The *seventh* of these anathemas is this—‘ If any one say that Christ was saved, and confeseth not that he was the Saviour of the world, and the light of the world, as it is written, let him be anathema.’<sup>1</sup> There is a strong resemblance between this, and the *tenth* of the twelve anathemas of the Council of Ephesus, which condemns those who say that Christ offered a sacrifice for himself also, and not for us only, since he could need no sacrifice, who knew no sin. If our Lord redeemed his own creature-substance, as we are now taught, then Gregory and the Council of Ephesus were wrong ; and Paul and Nestorius were right ; though to do the latter justice, he did not go so far, however naturally the tenet may result from his principles.

The *ninth* anathema is,—‘ If any one say that Christ was changeable or mutable, and confess not that he was unchangeable in his spirit, and incorruptible in his flesh, let him be anathema.’<sup>2</sup>

There is also a creed ascribed to Gregory, to which the same objection has been taken. To that objec-

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ τις λεγεί σωζομενον τον Χριστον, και μη ὁμολογεῖ αὐτον σωτήρα του κοσμου, και φως του κοσμου, καδως γεγραπται, αναθεμα εστω.

<sup>2</sup> Εἰ τις λεγεί ἱρεπτον η αλλοιωτον τον Χριστον, και μη ὁμολογεῖ αὐτον ατρεπτον τω πνευματι, αφθαρτον—some read φθαρτον, a mere mistake of the copyist, as it is in palpable opposition to the sense, as appears from the interpretation which follows it—τη σαρκι, αναθεμα εστω.

tion I make the same reply, but with considerably less confidence in the genuineness of the creed than in that of the anathemas. After condemning those who make different adorations due to Christ, one divine and one human, and explaining the doctrine of the Incarnation at much length, the creed says :—*Non duæ personæ NEQUE DUÆ NATURÆ, nec enim et quatuor adorari dicimus, Deum, et filium Dei, et hominem, et Spiritum Sanctum.* That this creed was written long before the Eutychian heresy is quite clear, and seems to be directed against that of Apollinarius, though it may as well be supposed to refer to that of Paul of Samosata. But whoever was its author, it is certain that the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh formed no part of his faith. A sounder view is given a little lower down,—‘ There was one Son before the Incarnation, and after the Incarnation the same was man and God, both as one : there is not one person of God the Word, and another of the man Jesus ; but the same who was previously the Son was united to the flesh of Mary, constituting himself a perfect and holy and sinless man, and administering the work of the Incarnation, for the salutary renovation of humanity, and of the whole world.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unus filius ante incarnationem, et post incarnationem idem homo et Deus utrumque tanquam unum: et non alia quidem persona Deus Verbum, alia vero homo Jesus; sed idem qui prius erat filius, unitus est carni ex Maria, constituens seipsum perfectum, et sanctum, et sine peccato hominem, et administrans opus incarnationis ad renovationem salutariam humanitatis, et totius mundi.

I know not if the original of this creed has ever been published. I quote from a translation of it by Turrianus which is inserted in the works of Gregory.

METHODIUS was bishop of Tyre, and suffered martyrdom in the year 302, or 303. His sentiments have been already sufficiently seen, in the manner in which he attempts to escape the pressure of the text urged by the Gnostics against the resurrection,—“flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.” He is the first author whom I have met with, who exalts the Virgin Mary with those extravagant praises which ultimately led to the adoption of the notion, that even she was born without original sin. In his discourse upon Simeon and Anna, he speaks of her in a way in which we are not now permitted to talk of Christ himself, without being charged with heresy ; declaring that her bosom was a throne far surpassing all humanity, and that time would fail him, and all generations, worthily to praise her. And as to the humanity of our Lord being inferior to that of unfallen Adam, he in some places seems to intimate that that humanity was the identical soul and body of Adam united to the Word. I feel it, therefore, totally useless to produce any of the extracts which I had made from him.

ARNOBIUS was a professor of rhetoric in Sicca, a city of Numidia, in the beginning of the *fourth* century. He has written a treatise, in *seven* books, against the heathens. As he wrote when he was only a catechumen, his work is of much greater value as an exposure of the follies of paganism, than as an illustration or defence of Christian doctrine. He

falls into various errors ; but they are obviously the errors, not of a man attempting to improve the gospel, but of a man imperfectly instructed in it. Indeed it may be remarked of most of the primitive defenders of Christianity that they find so rich and inviting a field in the absurdities of Paganism, that we are grievously disappointed in reading them, to find that they hardly notice the doctrines of the gospel at all. This remark is naturally suggested by the work of Arnobius, who was much better acquainted with the errors of the religion that he had forsaken, than with the truths of that which he had embraced.

In Book I. page 12, he has a great many questions, each commencing with the words, *ille mortalis, aut unus e nobis fuit ?*—‘ Was he mortal, or one of us,’ who did so and so ? All this however may be supposed merely as fitted to prove the Divinity of our Lord. But in page 18, he takes up the objection that he was slain as a man. He replies that it was not he, but the man whom he put on and carried about with him ; and enters at much length into the matter, in language more objectionable than any that Nestorius, some time afterwards made use of, but clearly enough shewing that of the sinfulness of our Lord’s flesh, he had no idea. I copy in the margin the conclusion of the passage.<sup>1</sup> I need not translate

<sup>1</sup> Vides enim si nollet inferri sibi a quoquam manus, summa illi fuisse contentione nitendum, ut hostes ab se suos vel potestate inversa prohiberet ? Qui cæcis restituerat lumina, is efficere si deberet, non poterat cæcos ? Qui debilibus integritatem, is debiles reddere difficultati habuit, aut labori ? Qui claudos præcipiebat incedere, is motus alligare membrorum nervorum



it. It is plain that Arnobius had not the most distant idea that Christ died by the common property of flesh to die. By an inverted application of his power, that is, by using it to hurt men instead of healing them, he could have smitten his enemies with blindness, and withered up all their strength. In talking of the *pueriles ineptiæ*, Arnobius goes much farther, and a great deal too far. But though his language here is very objectionable, and though throughout the whole passage it more widely deviates from the truth than that of Nestorius ever did ; still it seems plain that his errors were merely the errors of ignorance,—as indeed Cassidorus says that those of Nestorius himself were ; only he obstinately defended them, and that might be easily overlooked in a catechumen, which called for the most distinct notice, and the most severe censure in the bishop of Constantinople, then the imperial city. And it is quite clear that among his errors that of the sinfulness of Christ's flesh could not be numbered.

LACTANTIUS studied rhetoric under Arnobius, and wrote his *Institutions* about the year 320. I have already had occasion to shew that upon any

*duritia nesciebat? Qui extrahebat a tumultis mortuos, hinc arduum fuerat letum cui vellet indicare? Sed quia fieri ratio ea, quæ fuerant destinata, poscebat; et hic in ipso mundo, nec modo, quam gestum est alio, inestimabilis illa atque incredibilis lenitas injurias in se hominum, puerilibus pro ineptiis ducens, manus in se porrigi ab immanibus passa est durissimisque latronibus, nec imputandum putavit, quod illorum dissignasset audacia, dummodo suis ostenderet, quid ab sese expectare deberent.* The edition from which I copy, is that appended by Rigaltius to his edition of Cyprian.

point of Christian doctrine, his opinion is not worth quoting. He was, I believe, the first to argue upon a ground which has since been often employed to disprove the Divinity of our Lord, and is strongly relied upon in proof of the sinfulness of his humanity. The principle upon which he reasons, if it be a sound one, is perfectly sufficient to accomplish both those purposes. But it is certain that he contemplated no such results, nor saw the danger of the ground on which he argued. That he did not believe that our Lord took fallen sinful flesh, is apparent from the following crude statement:—‘For God the Father, the origin and principle of things, since he has no parents, is most truly said by Trismegistus to be *απαλωρ και αμηλωρ*, without Father and without Mother, as he is procreated of none. Therefore also it behoved the Son to be twice born, that he might be without father and without mother. In his first spiritual nativity, he was without mother, because without the intervention of a mother, he was generated of God the Father alone. In his second fleshly nativity he was without father; since without the intervention of a father he was generated in the virgin’s womb, *that bearing a middle substance between God and man*, he might lead this our frail and feeble nature, as it were by the hand to immortality. He was made the Son of God through the Spirit, and the Son of Man through the flesh, that is, both God and Man. The power of God appeared in him from the works which he wrought; the frailty of man

from the passion which he endured, which why he undertook, I shall shew in a little. In the mean time we learn from the prophets that he was both God and man *mixed* of both.’<sup>1</sup> Should any one choose to charge Lactantius with the heresy which was afterwards known by the name of Eutychianism, such language would afford a ground for the charge. But the truth is that he had no design to teach that, or any other heresy; he improperly expressed what he imperfectly understood, that is all.

JULIUS FIRMICUS MATERNUS wrote under the government of the Emperor Constantius and Constans, and consequently near the middle of the *fourth* century. Who he was, what he was, or of what country, is unknown. He has addressed to the Emperor just named, a very small but a very excellent treatise, *De religionum profanarum errore*. Though like the two last-quoted authors, he assails the absurdities of paganism, yet he shews himself much better acquainted with the doctrines of the

<sup>1</sup> In prima enim nativitate spiritale *αμνηρω* fuit; quia sine officio matris a solo Deo Patre generatus est. In secunda vero carnali *απαρω* fuit; quoniam sine patris officio, virginali utero procreatus est; ut mediam inter Deum et hominem substantiam gerens, nostram hanc fragilem imbecillemque naturam quasi manu ad immortalitem posset educere. Factus est et Dei filius per spiritum, et hominis per carnem, id est, et Deus et homo. *Nec Deus nec homo*, would have been a truer definition of his *media substantia*.—Dei virtus in eo ex operibus, que fecit apparuit; fragilitas hominis, ex passione quam pertulit, quam cur suscepit, paulo post docebo. Interim et Deum fuisse et hominem, ex utroque genere permistum, prophetis vaticinantibus discimus. *Institutiones, Lib. iv. Cap. 13.* Edition of Spark, Oxford, 1684.

gospel than either of them. His object, indeed, does not lead him to enter into any particular exposition of these doctrines; but his incidental notices of them shew an acquaintance with them which neither Arnobius nor Lactantius had attained. In one place, he thus speaks,—‘ But this holy stone, that is, Christ, either sustains the foundations of faith, or placed upon the corner, conjoins the two walls, that is, collects into one the people of the Old and of the New Testament; or certainly he associates with man a diversity of body and mind by an inviolable immortality; or promulgates the law; or bears testimony against sinners, &c.’<sup>1</sup> He says also,—‘ We drink the immortal blood of Christ; the blood of Christ is joined to our blood. This is the salutary remedy for thy crimes, which repels the deadly poison from the people of God.’<sup>2</sup> Again,—‘ All the elements were troubled during the combat of Christ, then, namely, when first he armed his human body against the tyranny of death. For three days that conflict endured, till death, all the powers of its malice being conquered, was broken.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lapis autem hic sanctus, id est Christus, aut fidei fundamenta sustentat, aut in angulo positus, duorum parietum membra æquata moderatione conjungit, id est, Veteris et Novi Testamenti in unum colligit, gentes; aut certe corporis et animi diversitatem, inviolata homini immortalitate consociat; aut legem promulgat, etc. p. 35, *Edition of Wower, Oxford, 1662.*

<sup>2</sup> Christi immortalem sanguinem bibimus; nostro sanguini Christi sanguinis adjunctus est. Hoc est salutare remedium scelerum tuorum, quod a Dei plebe mortiferum virus excludit, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Omnia elementa Christo pugnante turbata sunt, tunc scilicet cum primum contra mortis tyrannidem humanum corpus arenavit. Per triduum ista con-

It was common among the Fathers to apply to the crucifixion of our Lord, the text, “ the government shall be on his shoulders,” some applying it to his cross being laid on his shoulders while he bore it to the place of crucifixion, and most applying it to the circumstance of its being applied to his shoulders while it bore him ; so much were they in the habit of considering the cross as the scene of our Lord’s triumph over death, and not as the scene of death’s conquest of him. They expound consequently the figure of the cross, as significative of his dominion. They differ no doubt in the details, which in all, will in the present age, be considered as fanciful. Some tell us that the bottom of the cross being sunk in the earth, denoted the dominion of him on whose shoulders it was, over the infernal powers ; its top erected toward heaven signified his dominion over the heavenly powers ; and the ends of the transverse beam, pointing in opposite directions, shewed the extension of his dominion over all things. This is not exactly the interpretation of our present author, nor is it worth while to give it. It is enough to say, that it is exactly the same in principle. I refer to it for the sake of the reflections with which he follows up his explanation. It is one of his peculiarities,—and a very excellent peculiarity it is,—that the mention of a heathen absurdity, commonly reminds him of some opposite excellence in Christianity. The

*flictatione pugnatum est, quamdiu mors, superatis maliciæ suæ viribus, frangeretur, p. 41.*



mention of some of the *horned* gods of the heathens reminds him of the *horns* of the cross, that is, the ends of the transverse beam, and according to him the upper end also of the upright beam; after having shewn the meaning of which, he says:—‘Behold the venerable horns of the cross! behold the immortal excellence of holy power, and the divine structure of a glorious work! Thou, Christ, by extended hands,—*extended on the cross, namely*—sustainest the world and the earth, thou sustainest the government of heaven: our salvation adheres to thy immortal shoulders; thou, Lord, carriest the sign of eternal life; thou by thy adorable inspiration, hast told us this through the prophets, for Isaiah saith, “Unto us a Son is born, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be the messenger of great counsel.” These are the horns of the cross by which all things are supported and contained. Upon these horns the life of men securely rests.’<sup>1</sup> Such sentiments, somewhat fanciful though they be, I confess I feel to be pleasant after the eloquent ignorance of Lactantius.

EUSTATHIUS, bishop of Antioch, died about the year 335. He has written a treatise on the Pythoness, which I have not read. Some fragments of his other theological works are preserved by Theodoret, from whom I take the following quotations.

<sup>1</sup> P. 38. As I quote the passage for no argumentative purpose, I may be spared copying the original.

On the text, "The Lord created me the beginning of his way," he says,—'For the temple is properly the pure and immaculate human tabernacle of the Word, in which God dwelt,' and in proof of this he quotes the text, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rear it up."<sup>1</sup> The following is from his book on the soul—'Their ungodly calumny may be easily repelled; especially if he did not, for the salvation of men, willingly give up his own body to death. For, first, they attribute much weakness to him, as if he had not been able to repress the attack of his enemies.'<sup>2</sup> Again,—'If then, from what has already been stated, the Divinity of Christ is shewn to have been impassible, they in vain refer to the decision of the Apostles. For if Paul says, "The Lord of glory was crucified," plainly referring to the Man, it will not be proper on that account to attribute the suffering to the Divinity. Why then do they join these things, saying, that Christ was crucified through weakness?'<sup>3</sup>

EUSEBIUS of Cesarea died in the year 338.

<sup>1</sup> Ναος γὰρ Κυρίως ὁ καθάρος καὶ ἀχραντος, ἡ κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν λόγον σκηνή, ἐνθα προφανῶς σκηνώσας ὤκησεν ὁ Θεός. Eranistes of Theodoret, Dialogue I. p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Δι' ὀλίγων δὲ ἐστὶν ἐλεῖν τὴν ἀσέβη συκοφαντίαν αὐτῶν· μαλιστα μὲν γὰρ, εἰ μὴ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐνεκὴν σωτηρίας εἰς τὴν τοῦ θανάτου σφαγὴν τὸ ἴδιον ἐκούσιως ἐξεδίδου σῶμα. Πρῶτον μὲν πολλὴν αὐτῷ περιᾶπτουσιν ἀδυναμίαν, ὅτι μὴ ὅιος τ' ἐγενετο τὴν τῶν πολεμίων ὄρμην ἐπισχεῖν. Eranistes, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Εἰ γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος ἐφράσε τὸν Κύριον τῆς δοξῆς ἐσαυρωσθῆναι, σαφῶς εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπου ἀφορῶν, οὐ παρα τοῦτο δεήσει παῖδος τῷ θεῷ προσάπτειν. Τί οὖν ταῦτα συναπτοῦσι πλεοντεῖς ἐξ ἀσθενείας ἐσαυρωσθῆναι λεγοντες τὸν Χριστόν. Eranistes. p. 157.

Remarking that our Lord by his Incarnation neither changed his essence, nor lost what belonged to his own nature, nor fell away from his Divinity, he says, —‘ Nor did he converse with those only who were there where his human vessel was present, forbidden to be in other parts of the universe. For then when he had his conversation with men, he nevertheless filled all things, and at the same time was with the Father, and in the Father, and also managed all things in heaven and in earth, by no means shut out, as we are, from being present every where ; nor prevented from exercising his Divine powers in the usual manner, but communicating the things that belong to himself to the man, not however receiving from the mortal man the things belonging to him ; furnishing that which was mortal with Divine power, but not on the other hand participating in that which was mortal.’<sup>1</sup> In Book III. chap. iv. he enters largely into the question, and shews that our Lord’s death was perfectly voluntary, and that when he had arisen from the dead, he shewed himself ‘ in the flesh, in the body, the very same that he had been before, to his disciples ; ’<sup>2</sup> but I prefer the two following sentences from another Book, as they are short,—‘ Therefore nobody having power over his

<sup>1</sup> . . . . . αλλα ταμεν εξ αυτου μεταδιδους τω ανθρωπω, τα δ’ εκ του θνητου μη αντιλαμβανων και της μεν εν θεου δυναμεως τω θνητω χορηγων, της δ’ εκ του θνητου μητουσιας ουκ αντεπαγομενος. *Evangelical Demonstration*, Book IV. chap. xiii. *Edition of Vigerus, Paris 1628.*

<sup>2</sup> Και δεικνυσγε παλιν αυτος εαυτον ενσαρκον, ενσωμον, αυτον εκεινον, οιον και το πριν ην, τοις οικειοις μαθητοις.

life, he of his own accord laid it down for men, as he himself teacheth, saying, no man taketh my life from me,' &c.<sup>1</sup> Again,—‘Also when I hung upon my mother’s breasts, receiving the food of infants, I was thought to be like other human children, imperfect, and without the use of reason, not being such, though I had a body like that of men; for neither in power, nor in essence, (or substance) was I like others, but altogether free as thy Lamb, O thou who art my God,’ &c.<sup>2</sup> The whole of Book X. abounds in remarks of this kind.

While speaking of Eusebius, I may remark also that Marcellus of Ancyra, against whom he wrote a treatise, though very heretical with regard to the person of our Lord, yet repeatedly and distinctly admits, that his flesh was immortal. Now his peculiarity was, that the Word of God never had a *personal* existence until the Incarnation, and that after the mystery of God was finished, he should again lay aside his distinct personality, and exist only in the Father as before. This opinion would naturally have led him to adopt the Socinian views, that our Lord was merely a mortal man. And it is a strong proof of the nature of the sentiments then

<sup>1</sup> Διο μηδενος εχοντος εξουσιαν της αυτου ψυχης εκων αυτος υπερ ανθρωπων αυτην τεθεικεν, ωσπερ ουν διδασκει λεγων, ουδεις αιρει την ψυχην μου. κ. τ. λ. Book X. p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> Αλλα και οτε απο μαςων μητρος μου την νηπιωδη τροφην αναλαμ-  
βανων, ενομιζομεν ομοιως τοις των ανθρωπων βρεφεσιν ατελης ειναι και  
αλογος· μη ων γαρ τοιουτος, ει και σωμα μοι ομοιον ανθρωποις ην, και  
την δυναμιν, ουδε την ουσιαν, τοις πολλοις ων εμφορης, ανετος δε και  
απολυτος. κ. τ. λ. Book X. p. 500.



universally entertained, that even he, obviously against his principles, and with undisguised reluctance, admits that the flesh of Christ was immortal. By immortal, he of course meant that he did not need to die unless he pleased, as he was very far indeed from denying that he actually did die.

ATHANASIUS, bishop of Alexandria, died in 373. The zeal with which he laboured, and the fortitude with which he suffered, and the uncompromising fidelity to the truth which he uniformly manifested, have secured for him a well-deserved, and undying fame. I can make room only for one or two extracts from him, but there is no writer to whom the reader may be more safely referred for sound views upon the constitution of our Lord's person. His zealous opposition to the Arians naturally gave him a leaning toward the opposite extreme to theirs, that of exalting the humanity too high ; yet I recollect at present no expression of his upon this subject, which can be deemed directly erroneous, though certainly he has much language stronger by far than that which, in the present age, has been held to imply a very palpable denial of the humanity of our Lord altogether. Of this the following sentence will afford abundant proof, — ‘ But as we, having received the Spirit, do not lose our own nature, even so our Lord, after he was for our sakes made man, and took a body, nevertheless remained God : for he was not diminished by being clothed with a body, but rather deified the body, and



rendered it immortal.'<sup>1</sup> This language may probably be deemed too strong at present, even by those who would shun with the utmost care the tenet of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh ; but in the age of Athanasius it was common. It is certainly very liable to abuse, and has probably been the more carefully avoided in modern times, that at the Reformation, some Lutheran divines went so far as to maintain, that all the attributes of the Divinity were communicated to the humanity of Christ, than which a more fatal error cannot well be conceived. Athanasius had no such meaning ; but it is clear that using such language, he was far indeed from entertaining the tenet of the sinfulness of our Lord's flesh, for they who in the present age have been accused of going so far away from that doctrine, as to deny the flesh of Christ altogether, have used no language so strong as this. He states his sentiments also very strongly in his third discourse against the Arians, chap. xxxii. and xxxiii. But instead of multiplying extracts, I prefer taking one from his treatise on the Incarnation, of which I have had occasion to avail myself on a former occasion. In chap. xxi. of that treatise he argues against those who thought that if Christ must die, he ought at least to have laid aside his body in an honourable manner, and says, that if

<sup>1</sup> Ἀλλὰ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς τὸ πνεῦμα λαμβανόντος, οὐκ ἀπολλυμένῃ τὴν ἰδιαν ἑαυτῶν οὐσίαν· ὅντως ὁ Κύριος γενομένος δι' ἡμᾶς ἀνθρώπος, καὶ σῶμα φορέσας, οὐδὲν ἦν θεός· οὐ γὰρ ἠλλαττοῦτο τῇ περιβολῇ τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐθεοποιεῖτο τοῦτο, καὶ ἀθάνατον ἀπετελεῖ. Epistle on the Decrees of the Council of Nice, chap. xiv.

Christ had died in bed like other men, he might have been supposed, like other men to have died through infirmity of nature, and to have had nothing more than other men. He goes on in the same manner in the succeeding chapters, till he comes to xxivth. which I give entire.

‘ It is necessary to anticipate an objection that may be raised by others, for some may be ready to say, ‘ If it was necessary that Christ should die in the sight of all, that the declaration of his resurrection might be believed, he ought surely to have chosen an honourable death, or at least to have avoided the ignominy of the cross.’ But if he had done so, it would have given room for the suspicion that he could not prevail over any kind of death, but only over that which he had chosen ; and hence there would have been no less a pretence for denying the resurrection. Hence death came to his body, not from himself, but from treachery, that whatever death they might inflict upon the Saviour, he might destroy *that* death. And as a noble challenger, alike prudent and manly, chooses not opponents for himself, lest he should be suspected of cowardice, but leaves that to the spectators, especially if they be enemies, that having conquered whomsoever *they* may choose to oppose to him, he may be judged the conqueror of all ; even so the life of all, our Lord and Saviour Christ, chose not for himself the death of the body, lest he might seem to fear any other death ; but even the death of the cross, chosen by others, and especi-

ally by enemies, which they, as bitter and ignominious, conceived was to be avoided, he refused not to undergo; that even this being dissolved, he might be believed to be the Life, and the power of death might be entirely destroyed. There happened therefore something wonderful and unexpected, that while they thought to inflict an ignominious death, that just became a trophy over death itself. Hence he neither suffered like John, by decapitation, nor like Isaiah was sawed asunder, that even in death his body might be preserved entire, and no pretence might be afforded to those who might wish to divide the Church.' <sup>1</sup>

In chap. xliv. of the same treatise, he argues that as corruption was inherent in the body, so it was necessary that in the body of Christ life should be inherent. 'If death inhered in the body, and was stronger than it, it was therefore necessary that life should be inherent in the body, and that the body, endued with life instead of death, might reject corruption.' Indeed such sentiments abound in him to such a degree, that some attempts have been made to call in question his belief in the human soul of Christ. I need not say that this is a point upon which there can be no question whatever; but had he written nothing save his treatise on the Incarnation, it is a charge from which it would not be easy to defend him.

<sup>1</sup> As the weight of the testimony here depends not upon a single phrase, about which there might be a difference as to the proper mode of translation, but upon the general strain of the reasoning, the labour of copying the original seems unnecessary.

HILARY, bishop of Poitiers, died in the year 367. In maintaining the purity of the Catholic faith against the Arians, he was the second man in that generation ; and he was the second, only because the first was Athanasius. Like that mighty master whom it was his delight to imitate, and whom it was his greatest crime, in that backsliding age, zealously to defend, he suffered banishment for the truth's sake ; like him, he endured suffering with the most unshrinking fidelity, and fortitude ; and like him, was at last happily restored to his Church and died in peace. Of such a man it is impossible to think or to speak without respect. I much regret therefore the necessity of introducing his name into this discussion at all ; for with regard to our Lord's humanity, his opinions were of the most fatal description. He maintained that our Lord was never capable of feeling hunger, or thirst, or weariness, or pain, or sorrow, or fear ; that he felt them all in appearance only, not in reality. Nor is it merely in a passing sentence, which might be hastily put down and easily overlooked, that he expresses such a view. The great object of his *tenth* book on the Trinity is just to state and defend this view ; and so warmly does he enter into it, that he calls in question the genuineness of that part of the Gospel of Luke which relates our Saviour's bloody sweat, and the coming of an angel to comfort him ; stating that it is wanting in many copies both Greek and Latin. But on the supposition that it may be genuine, he shews how it may be



explained in conformity with his views of our Lord's humanity. He is one of those who have richly furnished Priestley with materials for giving a plausible colour to the charge which he brings against the Fathers, of maintaining a view of our Lord's humanity which does not materially differ from that of the Gnostics. As it is to me the reverse of a pleasure to draw into notice the errors of such a man, I shall merely justify the remarks which I have felt it necessary to make, by throwing into the margin a passage from his tenth book on the Trinity, without translation. <sup>1</sup>

MACARIUS of Egypt. There were several of this name who lived nearly at the same time, towards the end of the *fourth* century. To which of them we are indebted for the fifty homilies that bear this name has not been ascertained; nor is it a matter of much consequence, as they are of little value. Of an Egyptian monk, in the end of the *fourth* century,

<sup>1</sup> Homo itaque Jesus Christus unigenitus Deus per carnem et Verbum, ut hominis filius, ita et Dei filius, hominem verum secundum similitudinem nostri hominis non deficiens a se Deo, sumpsit: in quem quamvis aut ictus incideret, aut vulnus descenderet, aut nodi concurrerent, aut suspensio elevaret, afferrent quidem hæc impetum passionis, non tamen dolorem passionis inferrent, ut telum aliquod aut aquam perforans, aut ignem compungens, aut aera vulnerans. Omnes quidem has passiones naturæ suæ infert, ut perforet, ut compungat, ut vulneret; sed naturam suam in hæc passio illata non retinet, dum in natura non est vel aquam forari, vel pungi ignem, vel aera vulnerari, quamvis naturæ teli sit vulnerare, et compungere et forare. Passus quidem Dominus Jesus Christus, dum cæditur, dum suspenditur, dum crucifigitur, dum moritur, sed in corpus Domini irruens passio, nec non fuit passio, nec tamen naturam passionis exercuit;



who certainly was not endued with much power of close thinking, or with much extent of knowledge, it can hardly be necessary to say, that he is as far as possible from holding the tenet of the sinfulness of our Saviour's flesh. He is full of allegory and mysticism, and seems to have been a good man with few clear ideas upon any subject. Speaking of the brazen serpent which Moses made, he calls it a 'new work,' and then goes on thus,—'So the Lord made a new work out of Mary, which he put on, for he brought not his body from heaven; he framed the heavenly spirit that entered into Adam, and this he mingled with his divinity, and put on human flesh, and formed it in the womb. As then before the time of Moses, God had not commanded a brazen serpent to be made in the world; even so until the time of our Lord, a new and impeccable body appeared not in the world.'<sup>1</sup> From such an author, this I suppose will be held sufficient.

cum et pœnali ministerio illa desævit, et virtus corporis sine sensu pœnæ, vim pœnæ in se desævientis excepit. Habuerit sane illud Domini corpus doloris nostri naturam, si corpus nostrum id naturæ habet, ut calcet undas, et super fluctus eat, et non degravetur ingressu, neque aquæ insistentis vestigiis cedant, penetret etiam solida, nec clausæ domus obstaculis arceatur. At vero si Dominici corporis sola ista natura sit, ut sua virtute, sua anima feratur in humidis, et insistat in liquidis, et exstructa transcurrat, quid per naturam humani corporis concepta ex Spiritu Sancto caro judicatur? Caro illa, id est, panis ille de cœlis est. Et homo ille de Deo est, habens ad patiendum quidem corpus, et passus est, sed naturam non habens ad dolendum. Naturæ enim propriæ ac suæ corpus illud est, quod in cœlestem gloriam transformatur in Monte; quod attactu suo fugat febres, quod de sputo suo oculos format. p. 244. Edition of Paris, 1672.

<sup>1</sup> 'Οὕτω καὶ ὁ Κύριος καὶνον ἔργον ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας ἐποίησε, καὶ τοῦτο ἐνεδυσάτο, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἤνεγκε τὸ σῶμα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ· τὸ πνεῦμα το οὐρανιον ἐν

OPTATUS, bishop of Milevi in Africa, died about the year 372. He has written a treatise against Parmenianus a Donatist of some celebrity, against whom Augustine has also written. Near the beginning of his treatise, after stating the order in which he means to proceed, he says,—‘ But before I proceed to these matters, I shall first shortly shew how improperly you have treated the flesh of Christ. For you have said that that sinful flesh, sunk in the flood of Jordan, was cleansed from all impurity. You might properly say this, if the flesh of Christ, being baptized were sufficient for all, so that no one should be baptized for himself. If this were so, then the whole human race, every thing of corporeal birth, would have been there. There would be no difference between the believer and any heathen, for they all have flesh. And whilst there is nobody who has not flesh, if, as you say, the flesh of Christ was sunk in the flood of Jordan, all flesh would partake of this benefit. But the flesh of Christ in Christ is one thing, and the flesh of any individual in himself is another thing. What mean you by saying that the flesh of Christ was sinful? I wish you would say the flesh of man in the flesh of Christ. Nor even then would your notion have any probability. For every believer is baptized in the name of Christ,

*τω Αδαμ εισελθον ειργασατο, και τουτον συνεκερασε τη Θεοτητι, και ενεδυσατο ανθρωπινην σαρκα, και εμορφωσεν εν τη μητρα. Ὡςπερ ουν οφισ χαλκους εως τω Μωυσεως ουκ εκελευθη υπο του Κυριου εν κοσμω γενεσθαι· ουτω δη σωμα καινον και αναμαρτητον, εως του Κυριου ουκ εφανη εν τω κοσμω. Homily XI. p. 69.*

and not in the flesh of Christ, which was specially his own. I add, that his flesh, conceived of the Holy Spirit, could not with others be baptized for the remission of sins, as it admitted no sin. You have added, ‘and *sunk* in the flood of Jordan,’ using that word inconsiderately enough; as it belongs to Pharaoh and his people, who, by the weight of their sins, sunk like lead, not to rise again. But the flesh of Christ, while it descended into Jordan, and ascended out of it, you ought not to have said was sunk;—whose flesh is found to be holier than Jordan itself, so that it rather purified the water by its descent, than was itself purified.’<sup>1</sup>

Here at last we find the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh; and we find it just where it might

<sup>1</sup> Sed priusquam de rebus singulis aliquid dicam; quod carnem Christi male tractaveris, breviter ostendam. Dixisti enim carnem illam peccatricem, Jordanis demersam diluvio, ab universis sordibus esse mundatam. Merito hoc diceres, si caro Christi pro omnibus baptizata sufficeret, ut nemo pro se baptizaretur. Si ita esset, ibi esset totum genus hominum; illic omne quod corporalitu natum est: nihil esset inter fideles et unum quemque gentilem; quia in omnibus caro est. Et dum nemo non est qui non habeat carnem, sicut—*si ut*—dixisti, caro Christi diluvio Jordanis demersa est, omnis caro hoc beneficium consequeretur. Aliud est enim caro Christi in Christo, aliud uniuscujusque in se. Quid tibi visum est, carnem Christi dicere peccatricem? Utinam diceres, caro hominum in carne Christi. Nec sic probabiliter dixeris. Quia unus quisque credens, in nomine Christi baptizatur; non in carne Christi, quæ specialiter illius erat. Addo, quod ejus caro de Spiritu Sancto concepta, inter alios non potuit in remissam peccatorum tingi, quæ nullum videbatur admisisse peccatum. Addidisti, ‘et Jordanis diluvio demersam:’ satis inconsiderate hoc usus es verbo. Quod verbum soli Pharaoni et ejus populo debebatur, qui pondere delictorum, tanquam plumbum, ita mersus sit, ut ibi remanserit: Christi autem caro, dum in Jordane descendit et ascendit, demersa a te dici non debuit. Cujus caro, ipso Jordane sanctior invenitur, ut magis aquam ipsa descensu suo mundaverit, quam ipsa mundata sit. Lib. I. p. 8. Paris 1676,

have been expected to be found, not in a churchman, but in a Donatist, who is justly rebuked by the Catholic bishop for thus speaking of the flesh of Christ. Something similar however to the notion of Parmenianus, and indeed more grossly expressed, may be found at a still earlier period. There is inserted among the Epistles of Cyprian a small treatise, written by an anonymous author, but of or near the age of Cyprian, and opposing that Father's tenet, that they who had been baptized by heretics ought to be re-baptized. In that treatise mention is made of a book entitled *Pauli Prædicatio*,—it should be *Petri Prædicatio*—and it is said,—*In quo libro contra omnes Scripturas, et de peccato proprio confitentem invenies Christum, qui solus omnino deliquit, et ad accipiendum Ioannis baptisma pene invitum a matre sua Maria esse compulsum.* Here Christ is made 'the only sinner,' with a vengeance. Parmenianus I suppose did not go this length; for such blasphemy must soon have sunk under its own vileness. But he maintained the flesh of Christ to be sinful, and baptism to be in him, as in us, the sign of purification or regeneration. But if baptism was in Christ the sign of regeneration, then he must first have been pardoned; for there can be no regeneration without pardon being *previously* granted. If, then, Christ needed regeneration, there can be no doubt that he needed pardon too. Moreover the baptism of John was the baptism of repentance. If then the baptism of Christ was in him the sign of regeneration, it was



as clearly the sign of repentance ; and he who repents, who is pardoned and regenerated, is unquestionably a sinner. And this Parmenianus must be presumed to have held, though he went not to the extent of impiety quoted above.

One thing particularly deserves attention, that Optatus charges Parmenianus with holding the doctrine of universal pardon, because he calls the flesh of Christ sinful. These are in fact only different pullulations of the same radical error. If the one be true, the other must be so. This Optatus saw clearly. Now it is not a little singular, that these two different branches of the same error should spring up about the same time, but as far as my information goes, in different places, and from different heads. Neither party I suppose saw at first, that the one tenet involves the other. The two parties however, I understand, are now nearly amalgamated ; and if there be any who embraces the one of these tenets, without embracing the other also, he may be assured that he is yet very imperfectly instructed in the grounds of his own error. And if the testimony of Optatus be of any weight, he may be equally assured that both the one tenet and the other was held in reprobation by the primitive church.

HILARY, the Deacon of Rome, belongs to this period, though the time of his death be uncertain. He has left a commentary on the Epistles of Paul. The whole of his comment on Rom. viii. 3, is very



direct to the purpose, but I can make room for only a small portion of it.—‘For this reason he says—*like*, because though of the same substance of flesh, it had not the same nativity; because the body of the Lord was not subject to sin. For the flesh of the Lord was purified by the Holy Spirit, that he might be born in a body such as was that of Adam before sin.’<sup>1</sup> His exposition of the expression, “he condemned sin in the flesh,” which immediately follows, is singular. His idea is, that when Satan assailed the flesh of our Lord, he committed a sin against that flesh, and for that sin was condemned. He refers to the text “triumphing over them in it,” which he reads ‘triumphing over them in *him*,’ *id est*, in *Christo*, that is, in Christ. So little did he know of the interpretation which the tenet of the sinfulness of Christ’s flesh forces upon this passage.

CYRIL, bishop of Jerusalem, died about the year 386. In his *fourteenth* catechetical discourse, chap. vi. he says that Christ came to baptism that he might sanctify baptism. So far I should suppose he is right; for if baptism sanctified our Lord, who sanctified baptism? In the same place he refers to Satan

<sup>1</sup> Propterea ergo similem dixit, quia de eadem substantia carnis, non eandem habuit nativitatem; quia peccato subjectum non fuit corpus Domini. Expiata est enim a spiritu sancto caro Domini, ut in tali corpore nasceretur, quale fuit Adæ ante peccatum; sola tamen sententia data in Adam. The concluding clause I have not translated, because, if it has any sense, I cannot find out what it is. For *sola*, the Roman edition, an utterly falsified one, has *salva*, which would make sense; and in not a few MSS. the clause is wanting altogether, as I suppose it should be.

being deceived by the bait of Christ's flesh hiding his divinity, of which I have already had occasion to speak. In the same discourse, chap. xiv. he says :— ' His birth was pure and unpolluted ; for where the Holy Spirit breathes, there all pollution is taken away. Most pure, however, was the fleshly birth of the only begotten of a virgin, however heretics may gainsay it.'<sup>1</sup> He had previously spoken, in chap. xi. of the ' holy flesh, the veil of the Divinity,' but the passage cannot be translated. In discourse 13, chap. iii. he says :—“ He gave not up his life by compulsion, neither by violence was it taken away ; for hear what he himself saith, I have power to lay down my life, &c.”<sup>2</sup> In another place he says :— ' And do you wish to know, that not by violence he laid down his life ? Neither unwillingly gave up the ghost ? He addresseth the Father, saying—Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

BASIL, bishop of Cesarea, commonly called Basil the great, died in the year 379. In answer to the question, ' In what manner is the Divinity in flesh ? ' he says,—‘ As fire is in iron, not by transition, but by impartation. For the fire runs not to the iron, but remaining in its place, it imparts to the iron

<sup>1</sup> Αχραντος και αρρυπαρος ἡ γεννησις. ὁ που γαρ πνει πνευμα αγιον, εκει περιηρηται πας μολυσμος. Αρρυπος ἡ ενσαρκος γεννησις του μονογε-  
νους εκ της παρθενου, καν αντιλεγωσιν οἱ αιρετικοι. Edition of Mills,  
Oxford, 1703.

<sup>2</sup> Θυκ αναγκαιως αφηκε των ζωνν, ουδε βιοσφαγωγς ανερηθη.

<sup>3</sup> Και θελεις γνωναι οτι ου βιοσφαγωγς απεδετο την ζωνν ; ουδε ακουσιως παρεδωκε το πνευμα. Discourse 13, chap. xvi.

of its own native power. Neither is it diminished by the impartation, even when it has wholly imparted itself. In the same way truly, God the Word was not moved out of himself, and yet dwelt among us, nor sustained any change.’<sup>1</sup> And the Word was made flesh, neither was heaven deserted of him who sustains it, and earth received the heavenly in its bosom. Think not of any descent of the Divinity, for he passeth not from place to place, as bodies do ; neither fancy the Divinity to be changed into flesh, for that which is immortal is immutable. How then, you will say, was not God the Word filled with corporeal infirmity ? We reply, just as fire receives not the properties of iron. Iron is black and cold ; but at the same time being ignited, it puts on the form of fire, not darkening the fire, but itself becoming shining ; and not cooling the flame, but itself becoming heated. Even so truly, the human flesh of the Lord was made a partaker of the Divinity, but imparted not to the Divinity of its native infirmity. Or you do not admit that the Divinity operates like fire, in this mortal flesh ; but you fancy some passion about the impassible, from human infirmity ; and you doubt how the corruptible nature, by fellowship with God, could be preserved immortal ; and that while you see that the fire—for I still cling to the simile—is not consumed by the rust of the iron. Learn then the mystery. For this cause was God

<sup>1</sup> Basil had no idea of the new doctrine, that the Word brought with him a Godhead person, but no Godhead properties.

in flesh, that he might slay death, hiding itself in it. For as an antidote dwelling in the body, overcometh what is poisonous ; and as the darkness in a house is dispelled by the bringing in of light ; even so death ruling over human nature, was consumed by the presence of the Divinity. And as in water, frost prevails over moisture, while night and darkness endure ; but when the sun grows warm, is melted by his beams ; so death reigned until the coming of Christ ; but after that the grace of God which bringeth salvation appeared, and the Son of righteousness arose, death was swallowed up of victory, not bearing the coming of the true life.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Τίνα τροπον εν σαρκι ἡ Θεότης ; ὡς το πυρ εν σιδηρῳ· ου μητα-  
 βατικῶς, ἀλλὰ μεταδοτικῶς. Ου γὰρ ἐκτρεχει το πυρ πρὸς τον σιδηρον,  
 μενον δε καταχωραν μεταδιδωσιν αὐτω της οικειας δυναμειως, ὅπερ ουτε  
 ἐλαττουται τη μεταδοσει, καὶ ὅλον πληροι ἑαυτου το μετεχον. Κατα  
 τουτο δη καὶ ὁ θεος λογος ουτε ἐκινήθη ἐξ ἑαυτου, καὶ ἐσκηνωσεν εν  
 ἡμιν, ουτε τροπην ὑπεμεινε. Καὶ ὁ λογος σαρκὲς ἐγενετο· ουτε ὁ ουρανος  
 ἐρημος ἦν του συνεχοντος, καὶ ἡ γη εν τοις ἰδιοις κόλποις τον ουρανιον  
 ὑπέδεχετο. Μὴ καταπτωσιν της Θεότητος ἐννοησης, ου γὰρ μεταβαίνει  
 ἐκ τοπου εἰς τοπον ὡς τα σωματα, μηδε φαντασθῆς ἡλλοιωσθῆαι την  
 Θεότητα μεταβληθῆσαι εἰς σαρκα· ἀτρεπτον γὰρ το ἀθάνατον. Πως  
 οὖν, φησι, της σωματικης ἀσθενειας ὁ θεος λογος οὐκ ἐνεπλήσθη ; φαιμεν,  
 ὡς ουδε το πυρ των του σιδηρου ιδιωμάτων μεταλαμβάνει· μέλας ὁ σιδηρος  
 καὶ ψυχρος, ἀλλ' ὅμως πυρακτωθεὶς την του πυρος μορphen ὑποδύεται,  
 αὐτος λαμπρυνόμενος ουχι μελαινων το πυρ, καὶ αὐτος ἐκφλυγούμενος  
 οὐκ ἀποψυχων την φλογα. ὁὕτως δη καὶ ἡ ἀνθρωπινη του Κυρίου σαρκὲς,  
 αὕτη μετεσχέ της Θεότητος, ου τη Θεότητι μετέδωκε της οικειας ἀσθε-  
 νειας. Ἡ ουδε τῷ θνήτῳ τουτω τουτω πυρι ἰσως δίδως ἐνεργειν την  
 Θεότητα, ἀλλὰ πάθος περι τον ἀπαθῆ ἐκ της ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενειας  
 φανταζῆ, καὶ ἀπορεῖς πως ἡ εὐφθαρτος φύσις τη πρὸς θεον κοινωνία  
 ἐδυνατο το ἀκηρατον διασωσασθῆαι, καὶ ταῦτα ὄρων το πυρ (εἰτι γὰρ  
 εἶναι της εἰκονος) τῷ ἰω του σιδηρου μὴ δαπανώμενον ; Μὰδε δη το  
 μυστηριον, διὰ τουτο θεος εν σαρκι, ἵν' ἐναποκτείνῃ τον ἐμφωλευοντα  
 θάνατον. Ὡς γὰρ φαρμακῶν τα ἀλεξήτρια κατακρατεῖ των φθαρτι-  
 κῶν οικειωθέντα τῷ σωματι· καὶ ὡς το ἐνυπαρχον τῷ οἰκῷ σκοτος τη



In a subsequent part of the same homily, he says, when speaking of Joseph and Mary,—‘ Joseph was minded to put her away, not because he felt any detestation of her, but because he revered her as one filled with the Holy Ghost. And thence it is manifest that the constitution of the Lord was not after the common nature of flesh. For what was carried in the womb was immediately perfected, and not formed by degrees, as the words plainly declare. For it is not said, that which is *conceived*, but, that which is *born*. The flesh, therefore, compacted of holiness, was worthy to be united to the Divinity of the only begotten.’<sup>1</sup>

In his treatise against Ennomius, book iv. he decides that our Lord could not offer up the prayer, “ If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” on his own account ; for that would have been to accuse himself of fear and weakness, and to doubt whether there were not something impossible to God. Moreover he who gave life to the dead, had no need to ask

επεισαγωγή του φωτός λυεται, ούτως ὁ ἐνδυνασεύων τῇ ἀνθρώπινῃ θάνατος τῇ παρουσίᾳ τῆς θεότητος ἀφανισθῇ. Καὶ ὡς ἐν ὕδατι παγὸς ὅσον μενχρονον νύξ ἐστὶ καὶ σκία κατακρατεῖ τῶν ὑγρῶν, ἡλίου δὲ θάλαπντος ὑποτρίκεται τηκτίνι, ούτως ἐβασίλευσε μὲν ὁ θάνατος μέχρι παρουσίας Χριστοῦ· ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σωτηρίας, καὶ ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος τῆς δικαιοσύνης, κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος τῆς ἀληθινοῦς ζωῆς τῇ ἐπιδημίᾳ οὐκ ἐνεγκῶν. Homily xxv. Edition of Paris 1638.

<sup>1</sup> Καὶ ἐντευθεν δὴλον ὅτι οὐ κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν φύσιν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡ συφασίς ἐγένετο τῷ κυρίῳ. Εὐδὺς γὰρ τελειὸν ἦν τῇ σαρκὶ τὸ κυφοροῦμενον, οὐ ταις κατὰ μικρὸν διαπλάσεσι μορφῶθεν, ὡς δὴλοι τὰ ρήματα, οὐ γὰρ εἰρηται τὸ κνηθεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ γεννηθεν. ἐξ ἀγιοσύνης οὐν ἡ σαρξ συμπαγεῖσα, ἀξία ἦν τῇ θεοσι τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἐνωθῆναι.



life of any one. Besides if he did not willingly die, how could it be said that he became obedient unto death? For these reasons, he decides that this prayer was offered up for the sake of the Jews, that they might be kept from committing the great sin against him, which they were meditating; and is similar to his prayer on the cross,—“ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Did Basil then believe that our Lord took fallen, sinful flesh, and died by the common property of the flesh to die?

GREGORY, bishop of Nazianzum, died in the year 389. Speaking of the absurd and wicked names that were applied to Christ, he proceeds to say, in language hardly consistent with a due reverence for Scripture,—‘ But what is more absurd than all these, he is called sin itself, and a curse itself; not that he is so: for how can he be sin, who sets us free from sin? or how can he be a curse, who redeems us from the curse of the law?’<sup>1</sup> A little lower he says:—‘ Perhaps he takes sleep, that he may bless sleep; perhaps he labours, that he may sanctify labour; perhaps he weeps, that he may render weeping praiseworthy.’<sup>2</sup> Again, a few lines below, he says:—

<sup>1</sup> Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τούτων πάντων ἀποπτέρον, καὶ αὐτὸ ἁμαρτία καὶ αὐτὸ καταρα, οὐκ ἐστὶ μὲν, ἀκουεῖδε. Πῶς γὰρ ἁμαρτία, ὃ καὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐλευθέρων; πῶς δὲ καταρα, ἐξαγοράζων ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς καταρας τοῦ νομοῦ. Sermon xxxi. Edition of Paris 1609.

<sup>2</sup> Ταχὰ καὶ ὕπνον δεχεται, ἵνα καὶ ὕπνον εὐλογήσῃ. ταχὰ καὶ κοπία, ἵνα καὶ τὸν κοπὸν ἀγίασῃ. ταχὰ καὶ δακρυεῖ ἵνα τὸ δακρυὸν ἐπαινετὸν ἀπεργασῇται.

‘What he was he humbled, what he was not he assumed; not becoming two, but sustaining of two to become one. For he was God as to both, both as to that which assumes, and as to that which is assumed; two natures concurring in one, not two sons. Let not this mixture be denied.’<sup>1</sup>

After passages so distinct, it is unnecessary to multiply quotations, especially as I have already had occasion to shew what his opinion was. I shall, therefore, merely translate the following lines from Sermon xxxviii, which remind me of a remark that I might with advantage have made at an earlier period, but which cannot be out of place even here; he says,—‘Sometimes he is said to have been given up, but it is also written, that he gave himself; and he is said to have been raised up, and taken up to heaven, but he is also said to have raised himself, and to have ascended up into heaven. The one mode of expression shews his complacency, the other his power. The expressions which serve to lessen him, thou layest hold of; but those that exalt him, thou passest over. That he suffered, thou reckonest; that it was voluntary, thou forgettest to add.’ The remark

<sup>1</sup> Οὐκ ἦν ἐκενώσε, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἦν προσελάβεν. οὐ δύο γενομενος, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἑκ τῶν δύο γενεσθαι ἀνασχομενος. Θεὸς γὰρ ἀμφοτέρω, τὸ τε προσλάβον καὶ τὸ προσληφθέν. δύο φύσεις εἰς ἓν συνδραμουσαι, οὐχ υἱοὶ δύο. μὴ καταψεδεσθῶ ἡ συγκρασις. In Sermon xlii. he repeats the same thing, that God makes one of two opposite things, flesh and spirit, of which the one defies, the other is defied. Oh unheard of mixture! Oh wonderful temperament! the self-existent is born, the uncreated is created. Ω τῆς καινῆς καινῆς μιξεως, ὡ τῆς παραδοξου κρασεως, ὃ ὡν γινεται, καὶ ὁ ἀκτιστος κτίζεται.

to which I have just referred is, that the resurrection of our Lord is occasionally ascribed to each of the persons of the Holy Trinity. This shews the unity of the Godhead in all these persons. What one does by the power of the Godhead is done by all. But there is a further reason for this diversity of expression, which is not accidental, a supposition inconsistent with the plenary inspiration of 'all Scripture.'

We want to know whether the work of Christ was perfectly satisfactory, and whether we may rely upon it without a fear. We learn this most clearly and decisively from the fact, that God "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God." We learn from this also, not to consider the Son as our friend, but the Father as our foe ; a tenet which we are falsely reported by some to hold.

We want to know also that the death of Christ was perfectly voluntary ; for if it were not so, it could be no atonement. We want also to know whether he be perfectly able to secure us in the possession of that spiritual life which he bestows upon us. That he raised up himself proves this in the most decided manner. For surely his death was perfectly voluntary,—it was by no power of death that he died, who could raise himself from the dead. Surely him whom death, and he that had the power of death, could not keep in the state of the dead, when he was in that state, was one whom, when living, they could not slay. But his body and his

soul existed only in the person of the Word. Out of that person it were most impious to suppose that they ever existed for one moment. If then he could not prevent death from effecting that separation between that soul and body, which constituted the death of Christ, how is it possible to believe that he can prevent death from reigning over us? We surely cannot be "in Christ," more intimately, we cannot be united to him more closely, than his own humanity. If it was his own divine will to pour out that soul unto death, and to give that body to the tomb, while both subsisted indissolubly still in him, then can we repose ourselves upon him with the most delightful confidence that none can ever pluck us out of his hands. Then also shall our flesh rest in hope, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body. Then shall we without a fear consign these earthly tabernacles to the tomb, assured that even our bodies are still united to Christ, and shall rest in the grave till we shall hear the voice that says, "Awake, O thou that dwellest in the dust, arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee." That Christ raised up himself, and thus shewed that death had never any power either to take or to keep his life, is to us the firm assurance of all these happy hopes. He that could raise up himself from the dead, could assuredly never die, but because he pleased, and how he pleased, and when he pleased.

We want to know, that there is a power that can

quicken us who are dead in trespasses and in sins, and that can repress those corruptions, with regard to which we often feel as if they were so interwoven with every thought, and every emotion, as to render the idea of ever escaping from their contaminating influence utterly hopeless. How often, looking into our own hearts, do we feel disposed to ask in the spirit of despondency, “Can these dry bones live?” Thanks be to God they can, for the Holy Spirit of God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead; and the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, assures us of the exceeding greatness of his power toward those who believe. The Spirit raised up the Lord, and therefore there is none dead whom he cannot quicken, and none bound with a chain of corruption which he cannot break, and none stained with a depth of pollution which he cannot convert into purity. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”<sup>1</sup>

GREGORY, bishop of Nyssa in Cappadocia, died in the year 395. In his seventh Sermon on Ecclesiastes, he says,—‘It belongs to the Lord alone to have none of the things of the adversary, being made

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 10.



a partaker of our affections without sin ; for he saith, “ The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”<sup>1</sup> The whole of his Catechetical Oration may be referred to, but I cannot afford room for the extracts which it furnishes. I may merely remark that in chapter 10, he asks, ‘ Who is there that saith that the infinite Divinity is circumscribed by the flesh as by some vessel? Even our own intelligent nature is not circumscribed by the flesh.’ In chapter 12, he proves the Divinity of our Lord from his miracles, and from this that he was more powerful than death and corruption, which belongs to God alone. The whole of chapter 13 is to prove the superiority of our Lord to us, from this, that we begin *εκ παδους* and end *εν παδει* while he did not. In chapter 24, he says, ‘ The Divinity united to human nature becomes this, and is that.’ In chapter 32, as also in other parts of his writings, he gives the usual exposition of the figure of the cross, applying to it the texts Ephes. iii. 18, and Psalm cxxxix, 8. He speaks frequently of the *mixing* of the two natures in Christ, a mode of expression the danger of which was not then seen, but which no man could use who imagined the humanity of Christ to be sinful. I prefer however taking the following passage from his first Sermon on the Resurrection ; and as it is long, I shall give the original only where it seems to be

<sup>1</sup> Διὸ το μὴδεν ἐσχηκεναι τῶν τοῦ ἀντικειμένου κτημάτων μονοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου εἶναι, τοῦ μετασχυόντος ἡμῖν τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, Vol. I. p. 444. Paris 1615.

necessary. In answer to the inquiry how Christ could be at the same time in the grave, with the Fathers in Hades, and with the thief in Paradise, he first refers to his power of being every where, as God, and then proceeds thus :

‘ But I have learned another reason of this, which, with your leave, I shall shortly explain. When the Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, it was that a new man might be constituted in her, who is for this reason called *new*, that he was created—*ἐκλίσθη*—by God. Not according to human custom, that he might be the house of God, not made with hands. For the Most High dwells not in houses made with hands, that is, in the works of man. Then wisdom building a house, and by the overshadowing of power as by the impression of a seal formed within,<sup>1</sup> the Divine power was tempered with both the parts of which human nature consists, that is, with both soul and body, having mingled itself in a suitable manner with each.<sup>2</sup> As therefore each part was dead through disobedience, (for the death of the soul is to be separated from the true life, and the death of the body is corruption and dissolution) it was necessary that the mixture of life with both these should expel death. The Divinity therefore being mingled in a suitable manner with each of the parts of the man,

<sup>1</sup> Τότε αυτοῖς τοῦ οἴκου τῆς σοφίας οἰκοδομοῦσης, καὶ τὸ τῆς δυναμὸς ἀποσκίασματι δίδωει τύπῳ σφραγίδος ἐνδοθεν καταμορφωθέντος κ. τ. λ.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐκατέρῳ καταλλήλως ἑαυτὴν καταμιξάσα.

the manifest indications of the super-eminent nature appeared in both. For the body shewed the Divinity in it, curing diseases with a touch. The soul manifested the Divine power, by its powerful will. For as the sense of touch is peculiar to the body, so is a choosing will to the soul.<sup>1</sup> The leper approaches with a body already dissolved and consumed; and how is he healed by the Lord? The soul wills: the body *touches: by each the disease is expelled; for immediately, as it is written, the leprosy left him.*<sup>2</sup> Again, when so many thousands sat with him in the wilderness, to send them away fasting he wills not. With his hands he breaks the bread. You see how the Divinity united to each part, declares itself, by both, while the body acts, and the soul wills. But why should I go over each of the miracles performed in the same way, spending words on what is manifest? Therefore let us return to the subject on account of which I mention these things. The question is—How was the Lord at the same time in Hades and in Paradise? Of this question one solution is, that no place is impervious to God, in whom all things consist. Another solution is that to which our discourse now tends, namely, that God, having changed the whole man into the Divine nature by his mixture with him, at the time of his death departed not from

<sup>1</sup> Τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ κατὰ προαίρεσιν κίνησις.

<sup>2</sup> There is nothing in the Greek answering to the words in *italics*. Something has evidently dropped out of the sentence, which is supplied as above, by Zinus.

either part of the man whom he had assumed, for the gifts of God are without repentance.<sup>1</sup> The Divinity did, of its own will, disjoin the soul from the body, but shewed itself to be remaining in both. For by the body, into which he admitted not that corruption which comes by death, he destroyed him that had the power of death. By the soul, he opened a passage for the thief into Paradise. Both were accomplished at once, the Divinity effecting the good through both,—through the incorruption of the body the destruction of death; and through the soul, brought to its own home, opened a way for man to Paradise. Since then the composition of man is two-fold, but the nature of the Divinity is simple and one, in the time of the separation of the soul and body, that which is indivisible was not separated; but rather by the unity of the Divine nature, being equally in both parts of the man,<sup>2</sup> they which were separated were again united. And thus, as death follows from the separation of what had been joined; so, from the junction of what had been separated comes the resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

That some slight error is here mingled with important truth, I may admit, but both the error and the truth are directly opposed to that tenet which

<sup>1</sup> Ὅτι ὅλον τον ἀνδρωπον του θεου, δια της προς ἑαυτον ανακρασεως, εις την θειαν φυσιν μετασκευασαντος, εν τω καιρω της κατα το παθος οικονομιας ου θατερου μερους το ἀπαξ εγκραθεν αναχωρησεν.

<sup>2</sup> Της γαρ ἐνοτήτι της θειας φυσεως, της κατα το ισον εν ἀμφοτεροις ουσης.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II. p. 823.

teaches that the flesh of our Lord was fallen sinful flesh, up to the moment of his resurrection ; flesh dying by the common property of flesh to die.

AMPHILOCIUS, bishop of Iconium, died about the year 395. In his Sermon on the Mother of God, he denies the name of Christian to any one who denies that Mary was made like Eve in her unfallen state ; and says that as fire purges out the rust of iron, so the Holy Spirit perfectly purged out all evil from Mary. From him one sentence may suffice. ‘ He is truly impious and alienated from the truth, who does not say, that the Saviour and Maker of all, according to both natures of which he consists, has all power and efficacy, and is free from all necessity.’<sup>1</sup> I observe too, that at page 81, he applies the text, ‘ Free among the dead,’ to Christ, as Cyril of Jerusalem also does ; misapplying the text indeed, yet using it to express an undeniable truth ; for Christ most certainly was ‘ free among the dead,’ going to death, and returning from it when he pleased.

AMBROSE, bishop of Milan, died in the year 396. The manner in which he proves that the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped, is as follows. ‘ But the apostles and angels adore not only his Divinity, but

<sup>1</sup> Ἀσεβὴς οὕτως ἐστὶ, καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλοτριὸς, ὁ μὴ λεγὼν τὸν Σωτήρα τῶν ὅλων καὶ ποιητὴν, κατ’ ἀμφω τῶν ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶ κατὰ φύσιν, αὐτεξούσιον, καὶ ενεργη, καὶ πάσης ἀναγκῆς ἐλευθέρον. Dogmatic Epistle to Pancharius, p. 155. Paris 1644.



also his footstool, as it is written, "Worship ye his footstool, for it is holy." Or if they deny that in Christ even the mysteries of the Incarnation are to be adored, in which we observe certain traces of the Divinity, and certain ways of the heavenly word, let them read that even the apostles adored him rising in the glory of the flesh.' But then nothing is to be worshipped but God alone; how then are we commanded to worship his footstool? He therefore proceeds to inquire what this footstool, which we are commanded to worship, is; and he finds that it is the Earth, for it is written, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool." But then neither are we to worship the earth, which is only the creature of God.' Having got so far he thus goes on: 'But let us see if the prophet do not say that that earth is to be adored, which the Lord Jesus took in his assumption of flesh. Therefore by the footstool, earth is meant; and by earth, the flesh of Christ, which we still adore in the mysteries, and which the apostles adored in the Lord Jesus, as we have said above. For neither is Christ divided, but one; nor when he is adored as the Son of God, is he who was born of the Virgin denied. Since then the sacrament of the Incarnation is to be adored, but the Incarnation is the work of the Spirit, as it is written, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and that which shall be born of thee holy, shall be called the Son of God;" without doubt the Holy Spirit is to be adored, when he is

adored who, according to the flesh, was born of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>1</sup>

The same doctrine he elsewhere teaches thus,—  
 'But it is to be feared, you say, lest, if we should attribute to Christ two principal senses, or a double wisdom, we should divide Christ. Do we divide Christ, when we adore both his Divinity and his flesh? When we venerate in him the image of God and the cross, do we divide him, &c.'<sup>2</sup> He is treating of our Lord's growth in wisdom. He says that he grew in it only as a man; an interpretation of the text which is contrary to that of most of the Fathers, and which afterwards came to be deemed little less

<sup>1</sup> Adorant autem non solum divinitatem ejus, sed etiam scabellum pedum ejus, sicut scriptum est; et adorate scabellum pedum ejus; quoniam sanctum est. Aut si negant quia in Christo etiam incarnationis adoranda mysteria sint, in quibus velut vestigia quædam divinitatis expressa, et vias quasdam verbi cœlestis advertimus; legant quia et apostoli adorabant eum in carnis gloria resurgentem.

Videamus tamen ne terram illam dicat adorandum propheta, quam Dominus Jesus in carnis adsumptione suscepit. Itaque per scabellum terra intelligitur: per terram autem caro Christi, quam hodieque in mysteriis adoramus, et quam apostoli in domino Jesu, ut supra discimus, adorarunt; neque enim divisus est Christus, sed unus; neque cum adoratur tamquam Dei Filius, natus ex Virgine denegatur. Cum igitur incarnationis adorandum sit sacramentum, incarnatio autem opus Spiritus, sicut scriptum est, *Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi: et quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei*: haud dubie etiam Sanctus Spiritus adorandus est; quando adoratur ille, qui secundum carnem natus ex Spiritu Sancto est. *De Spiritu Sancto, Lib. iii. Cap. 11, Sect. 76 et 79.* Benedictine Edition, Paris 1690.

<sup>2</sup> Sed verendum est, inquis, ne si duos principales sensus aut geminam sapientiam Christo tribuimus, Christum dividimus. Numquid cum et divinitatem ejus adoramus, et carnem Christum dividimus? Numquid cum in eo imaginem Dei, crucemque veneramus, dividimus eum? *De Incarnationis Dominicæ Sacramento, Cap. vii. Sect. 75.* This I consider as being, upon the whole, the very best treatise on the Incarnation that I have seen.

than heretical. And indeed he himself, in his treatise *De Fide. Lib. v. Cap. 18*, plainly intimates his dislike of it, and says that Christ so loved his apostles that he chose to appear ignorant of some things, rather than tell them what he judged it was not proper for them to know. Hence his Benedictine Editors suppose that he only uses that interpretation here for the convenience of refuting heretics, and not because he himself approved of it.

In another place, quoting the text Rom. viii. 3, he observes,—‘ He does not say, in the likeness of flesh, because Christ took the reality, not the likeness of flesh ; neither does he say, in the likeness of sin, because he did no sin, but was made sin for us ; but he came in the likeness of flesh of sin, that is, he took the likeness of sinful flesh ; and therefore the likeness, because it is written, “ He is a man, and who shall know him ? ”’<sup>1</sup> He was a man in the flesh, according to man who might be known, in power above a man, who could not be known ; so that he has our flesh, but has not the blemishes of this flesh.’<sup>2</sup> In the following section he goes on to shew

<sup>1</sup> Καὶ ἀνθρώπος ἐστὶ, καὶ ἵς γνωσεῖται αὐτὸν ; Jeremiah xvii. 9. Septuagint translation.

<sup>2</sup> Non in similitudinem carnis ait, quia Christus veritatem suscepit carnis humanæ, non similitudinem ; neque in similitudinem peccati ait, quia peccatum non fecit, sed peccatum pro nobis factus est : sed venit *in similitudinem carnis peccati*, hoc est, suscepit similitudinem carnis peccatricis ; ideo similitudinem, quia scriptum est : *Et homo est, et quis agnoscet eum ?* Homo erat in carne secundum hominem, qui agnosceretur : virtute supra hominem, qui non agnosceretur ; ita et hic carnem habet nostram, sed carnis hujus vitia non habet. *De Pœnitentia, Lib. i. Cap. 3, Sec. 12.*

that he differed from us in not being conceived in iniquity, and born in sin, as we are, and concludes by saying, ‘The flesh of Paul was a body of death, as he himself says, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But the flesh of Christ condemned sin, which in being born, he did not feel; and which in dying he crucified; that in our flesh there might be a justification through grace, there where formerly there had been impurity through sin.’<sup>1</sup>

EPIPHANIUS, bishop of Salamis, died in the second or third year of the Fifth Century. The following decisive testimony I give in the original, without venturing to translate it. Αυτό το σωμα αληθινως, αυτην σαρκα, αυτην την ψυχην, αυτα τα παντα, ουκ αλλο τι παρα το ον σωμα, αλλ’ αυτο το ον ενδυναμωσας, εις μιαν ἐνοητη, εις μιαν θεοτητα, το σακικον αφθαρτον, το σωματικον πνευματικον, το παχυμερες λεπτομερες, το θνητο αθανατον, μη εωρακος ολως διαφθοραν, μη καταλειφθεισης της ψυχης εν αδη, μη μερισθεντος του οργανου προς αμαρτιαν, μη χραυθεντος του νου τροπη κ. 7, λ.<sup>2</sup> In this manner he goes on at considerable length, teaching the deification of the humanity in terms stronger than will readily be met with elsewhere.

In Heresy lxxvii. p. 1010, in answer to an objection

<sup>1</sup> Pauli caro corpus mortis erat, sicut ipse ait; *Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?* Christi autem caro damnavit peccatum, quod nascendo non sensit, quod moriendo crucifixit; ut in carne nostra esset justificatio per gratiam, ubi erat ante colluvio per culpam. Augustine, *Contra Julianum, Lib. ii. Cap. 4*, renders the expression more definite thus, nascendo non sensit *in se*, moriendo crucifixit *in nobis*. The Pelagian heresy taught Augustine to add these explanatory words to the expression of Ambrose, in order to mark more distinctly the difference between our flesh, and that of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Against Heresies, Book I. p. 49. Paris 1622.

of the heretics, of which he justly reprobates the folly, and which, without being urged by a stronger necessity than I feel at present, I should think it improper to notice, he very distinctly declares his view of the nature of our Lord's body; and that in a manner which, as well as the passage just quoted, might well have afforded farther materials to Priestley for giving a colour to his charge of Gnosticism against the Fathers. Nay, he seems to think that even the bodies of the apostles were raised above the condition of humanity, for he says,—‘It is confessed by all that the holy apostles were men, corruptible as to their body, as we are, but incorruptible by the glory of God dwelling in them, so that the shadow of Peter, and handkerchiefs from the body of Paul cured diseases.’<sup>1</sup>

CHRYSTOSTOME, bishop of Constantinople, died in exile in the year 407. I have no occasion here to make any lengthened quotations from the voluminous writings of this celebrated Father. Many of the fond and superstitious notions which then began to corrupt the purity and simplicity of Christian doctrine are to be found in his pages. He talks of the cross in a style in which we are not now permitted to speak of the flesh of him who hung upon it. Nay he assures us that our Lord took it with him to heaven,

<sup>1</sup> Πασι γαρ ὁμολογῆται, ὅτι οἱ Ἀποστολοὶ ἅγιοι ἀνθρώποι ἦσαν, φθαρτοὶ τὰ σωματὰ ὡς ἡμεῖς, ἀφθαρτοὶ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐνοικῆσαν αὐτοῖς Θεοῦ δοξάν. See Note N.



and will bring it with him again at his second coming, and that the obscuration of the sun, moon, and stars at that day, is to arise from their light being completely overpowered and outshone by the superior brightness of the cross.<sup>1</sup> It is true that he elsewhere makes a statement apparently inconsistent with this exaltation of the cross; for he tells us that both men and women who could obtain a piece of the cross cased it in gold, and wore it round their necks as a charm; a practice which he seems more inclined to boast of than to blame.<sup>2</sup> After this the reader will not be surprised to hear him proclaiming the praises of Mary in the loftiest strains, and maintaining her perfect sinlessness. He says,—‘The angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin, that he might change into honour the reproach of the female sex; Gabriel was sent that he might prepare a bridal chamber worthy of a pure bridegroom; Gabriel was sent that he might espouse the creature to the Creator; Gabriel was sent to the living palace of the King of angels; Gabriel was sent to a virgin, espoused indeed to Joseph, but reserved for the Son of God; the incorporeal servant was sent to a pure virgin; he who was free from sin, was sent to her who was incapable of corruption, &c.’<sup>3</sup> He who entertained such an idea of Mary, of course could not suppose that she

<sup>1</sup> Sermon on the Penitent Thief, Sermon xxxii. Vol. V. Edition of Fronto Ducaeus, Paris 1636.

<sup>2</sup> On the Divinity of Christ, Chapter ix.

<sup>3</sup> Ἀπεσταλὴ ὁ ἁμαρτίας ἐλευθερὸς πρὸς τὴν φθοράς ἀνεπιδεκτον.  
Sermon on the Annunciation, Vol. VI. p. 356.

communicated fallen, sinful wicked flesh to the Son whom she conceived by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, in the Sermon on the Nativity, he thus describes the flesh of Christ,—‘ But this we say, that Christ took flesh of the Virgin’s womb, pure, and holy, and spotless, and inaccessible to all sin ; and restored his own workmanship.’<sup>1</sup> By the restoration of his own workmanship here, I understand the restoration in himself of that sinless, unfallen humanity which he had created in Adam, and Satan had corrupted. This is more clearly expressed in another place where, treating of the varied forms of corruption which had resulted from the fall, he says,—‘ When therefore this image, as we have already said, was variously corrupted and dissolved, the Saviour came and again raised up his own image ; and what the devil destroyed, that the Creator bore, being made man ; not injuring his dignity, but shewing his love to men.’<sup>2</sup> On the following page, after remarking that the Lord armed himself with an earthly and weak body, he quotes the text, “ The weakness of God is stronger than men,” and then proceeds thus,—‘ The Lord put on strength, that is, the dispensation shining through the flesh ; for what is more powerful, or what is

<sup>1</sup> Εκεινο δε φαμεν, οτι καθαραν σαρκα, και αγιαν, και αμαμον, και αμαρτια απαση γεγεννημενην αβαλον εκ παρθενικης μητρας ανελαβεν ο Χριστος, καν λο οικειον διωρθωσαλο πλασμα. Vol. VI. Sermon xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> Επει ουν η εικων αυτη διαφορως, ως εφθημεν ειποντες, εφθαρτο και διαλελυτο, ηλθεν ο Σωτηρ και την ιδιαν εικονα παλιν ανεστησε ; και ην καλεσπασεν ο διαβολος, ταυτην εφορεσεν ο Δημιουργος ανθρωπος, ο γεγομενος φιλανθρωπος ; ου την αξιαν υβριζων, αλλα την φιλανθρωπιαν οριζων. Vol. VI. Sermon ii.

stronger than that precious and holy flesh? For by the body he defeated the incorporeal and malignant demons; and by the cross he triumphed over the adverse powers.’<sup>1</sup>

He often and earnestly contends that the death of our Lord was perfectly voluntary. This he does especially in Sermon vii. Vol. v. upon the words, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” He assigns two reasons for the prayer. The one is that as he permitted his body to hunger and thirst, so he prayed also in order to prove that he was truly a man. This it will be admitted is a very good reason, provided it be allowed that our Lord’s fear was real. Whether Chrysostome allowed this, seems doubtful. His other reason is, that our Saviour might, by his own example, teach his disciples never rashly to encounter dangers that they could avoid. In the same Sermon he uses the expression that our Lord prayed according to the humanity, and not according to the Divinity. I mention this, as he is the earliest author in whom I recollect to have met with that distinction, a distinction which was certainly calculated to prepare the way for that Nestorianism, which, at a somewhat later period, was introduced into the Church of Constantinople.

I have done. It could hardly answer any good

<sup>1</sup> *Ἐνεδυσάτω Κύριος δύναμιν, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς ἀναλαμπάσαν οἰκονομίαν. τί γὰρ ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἁγίας σαρκὸς δυνατώτερον; τί δὲ ισχυρώτερον; διὰ γὰρ σώματος τοὺς ἀσώματους καὶ πονηροὺς δαίμονας κατήγονισάτω, καὶ διὰ σταυροῦ τὰς ἀντικείμενας δυνάμεις ἐθριαμβέυσσε.*

purpose to trace the notions of the writers of more recent ages. There were giants among them ; but with the fundamental truths of the Gospel, the generality of them mingled a mass of superstition which it is painful to contemplate, preparing the way for all the usurpations of Rome, and all the gloom of the dark ages. That I have made no mistakes in traversing a field so extensive, and in many instances so obscure and perplexed, is perhaps more than can be reasonably expected, especially considering the disadvantages of various kinds under which I have laboured.<sup>1</sup> I can only say that I have taken all possible pains to avoid mistakes, and I trust that at least none will be found of such magnitude as materially to affect the force of the reasonings employed, or the weight of the testimonies adduced. And if these reasonings, and these testimonies be found to be substantially correct, they may be expected to exculpate me, and those who think with me upon this subject, from the charge of a criminal carelessness as to what the Scriptures teach upon it, and an equally criminal disregard to their authority. They will shew that I am not altogether destitute either of primitive precedent or of Scripture authority, when, looking to my Redeemer, not merely in the hour of his triumph, as ascending up on high, he led captivity captive ; but looking to him in the

<sup>1</sup> When I mention these disadvantages, I ought not to omit mentioning the kindness of two dignitaries of the church, as well as that of another clergyman, which though it could not remove, did very much lessen them, and greatly facilitated my progress.

lowest scene of his deep humiliation, and in the darkest hour of his most painful agony, I am disposed, without one feeling of hesitation, and without one misgiving thought, to bow the knee before him, and to say, “ My Lord, and my God.”

THE END.



## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A. PAGE 15.

The declaration, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," has, from the beginning, given rise to a considerable variety of opinion. Irenæus, Lib. V. Cap. xxiii. gives *five* different explanations of it, which had been advanced even at so early an age. The *first* is, that our first parents died on the day that they sinned, because the very act of disobedience was death. The *second* is, that on that day they became debtors to death. The *third* is, that the whole period of creation is but a day; and if therefore they died before the end of the world, they died on the day on which they transgressed. The *fourth* is, that they died on the same day of the week on which they had sinned, and might therefore be justly said to have died on the day on which they sinned. The *fifth* is, that as "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," therefore if they died within a thousand years, they died on the day on which they sinned. Perhaps I may be excused if I offer my own view of a text which at so early a period, gave rise to such a variety of interpretations; and upon which I know not if modern expositors have produced any thing more satisfactory. My opinion coincides more nearly with the first of these interpretations than with any of the rest. I conceive that in the very act of sinning Adam died, and died to the full extent of that death which was threatened. He lost that image of God, that

perfect conformity to God, and confidence in him, which constituted his life. He might still have continued to exist, as appears from the necessity of debarring him from the tree of life, "lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." I conceive then that when it was said, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die," spiritual death alone was intended. In this sense I think it would be understood by the angels who saw man created, and heard the sentence pronounced. Of that temporal death which results from the separation of the constituent parts of man, they can hardly be supposed to have had any idea. As little could they see what purpose could be answered by such a separation, if it was to be, as they must have understood the death threatened to be, eternal; for at that moment they could form no idea of redemption. Man might then have existed, even after the sentence of death which had been pronounced as the consequence of disobedience, had actually been inflicted; but then he would have existed only as an immortal sinner, that is, a devil. I feel fully disposed therefore to adopt the opinion of *Gregory Nyssen*, that temporal death was introduced after the fall as a benefit, that evil might not be eternal.<sup>1</sup> That death and natural evil are really evils and of a penal nature, I most readily grant: but I must consider them also as benefits, when I consider them as the means through which we escape a worse evil,—an immortal existence in guilt and in misery. Death was necessary to the introduction of redemption.

This view I am the more disposed to adopt that it effectually evacuates the Arminian interpretation of the sentence pronounced upon Adam after the fall. He is doomed to return to the dust, and to the endurance of natural evil: whence it has been argued that temporal death, and natural evil are the only consequences of the fall; for these alone are mentioned

<sup>1</sup> Catechetical Oration, cap. viii.

in the sentence pronounced upon Adam after he fell. But that more than this has been inflicted, and that all the seed of Adam are spiritually dead, "dead in trespasses and sins," I think undeniable. Yet this death is not pronounced upon Adam after he fell, for this reason that it had been already actually inflicted. Temporal death, and natural evil were denounced, and denounced apparently as something perfectly unexpected by Adam ; and denounced, as it afterwards appeared, as the commencement of a dispensation of mercy. That Adam had actually died before he was doomed to return to the dust, and that this latter death was really a mitigation of the former, is plain I think from the fact, that he had seen his own nakedness, and fled from the face of the Lord. This was surely death. And with Adam died the whole of his offspring in the very act of his disobedience. So far then is it from being true that temporal death and natural evil are the only consequences of the fall ; that the fact is, these were introduced as the first step toward the introduction of a dispensation which was to make the fall the means of that glorious manifestation of the divine perfections which Christianity affords.

These views are not essential to, nor even intimately connected with the train of argument pursued in the text ; and I throw them out rather as suggestions to be examined, than as opinions to be adopted. Should they be found to involve any serious error, I shall relinquish them without reluctance.

#### NOTE B. PAGE 38.

From what is said in the text it will be seen that I cannot believe that the millennium is to be introduced by miracles. Our Saviour worked miracles, and referred to them as proofs of his divine mission. The same attestation was given to the

Apostles, the "Holy Ghost bearing them witness with signs and wonders and mighty works." While they were necessary for the purpose of establishing Christianity, they were continued in the Church, but were gradually withdrawn as they became gradually less necessary for this purpose. That they were always to continue in the Church has been asserted. I cannot think so. I can find no promise to that effect ; and I can discover no beneficial purpose which such a promise could answer. It appears to me that the Jew has just as good reason to expect that miracles may be wrought in confirmation of Judaism, as we have to expect that they shall be wrought in confirmation of Christianity. The Church of Rome has indeed always laid claim to them ; and the early history of most new sects records abundance of them. I view them in both cases with a degree of suspicion amounting to unqualified incredulity, for the following reasons ; reasons which I shall merely state, without entering into either illustration or defence of them.

Miracles cannot now be required for the establishment of Christianity. It would imply a defect not only in the evidences of Christianity, but a defect in Christianity itself, to suppose that they can now be required as evidence of its divine origin. If therefore they be now employed at all, they must be employed for the introduction of a new dispensation. But that no new dispensation will ever be established, may be argued on many grounds upon which I cannot here enter. I may mention only the following. The Christian dispensation is one of unimproveable perfection. We cannot have clearer instructions given to us than are given to us in the Gospel, which makes the path of life so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. We cannot have addressed to us more urgent motives, than eternal misery on the one hand, and eternal happiness on the other,—that wrath of God which is revealed against all unrighteousness

of men, and that life and immortality which are brought clearly to light through Christ in the Gospel. We cannot have these instructions more impressively taught, or these motives more powerfully enforced than they are by the cross of Christ. No dispensation can communicate to the Christian greater power than that which is given to him by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which leaves no limit whatever to his power, but enables him to say, "I live, nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me," and "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." No dispensation can give us more perfect security that every promise of God will be fulfilled, and that the believer shall in nowise lose his reward, but shall be infallibly "kept through faith unto salvation," than is given to us by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; for this I think is the strongest of all possible arguments, "If God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up to death for us all, how much more will he not with him also give us all things?" I cannot admit therefore, that the Christian dispensation is susceptible of improvement; nor consequently can I admit that it is ever to be superseded by any other dispensation. Miracles therefore I conceive to be no longer called for.

Besides if the Millennium is to be introduced by, or to bring with it any means of grace which we do not now enjoy, the conclusion seems inevitable that the reason why Christianity has not triumphed over the whole world long ago, is to be found in its own intrinsic weakness and imperfection. The Millennium in this case must be not the triumph of the gospel, but an open proclamation of its insufficiency—a disannulling of it "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." To the infidel therefore who wishes to overturn Christianity, I apprehend no better weapon can be given; and to the careless sinner who despises it, no better news can be brought, than the doctrine which teaches that the Millennium is to provide us with means of grace which the gospel does not furnish us with.



The Millennium I understand to be the triumph of Christianity, and to be introduced for the purpose of proving its sufficiency—of proving that the reason why it meets with such partial success now, is that men do not acknowledge their dependence upon God for all that is good, and will not seek the spirit of the Lord: but that when he puts forth his power, the very means that have been so long and so generally opposed, shall prove abundantly efficacious. But let the Millennium bring with it some more powerful means of grace, if such there can be, than the Gospel furnishes, and then the conclusion must be that the superior holiness of that state must be attributed, not to a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but to the superior efficacy of the means employed. If this be true, then the insufficiency of the Gospel is proved. And if it be true, as some teach us, that during the Millennium men are to be saved by their own righteousness, then the Gospel is proved to be not only insufficient but false. When with these views I combine the fact, that a pretension to the working of miracles, so plausible, and bearing such a semblance of reality as to “deceive, if it were possible, the very elect,” is one of the predicted precedents of our Lord’s advent, I cannot help both hailing the pretensions to the working of miracles at present advanced, as a sign that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and regarding the pretensions themselves as groundless. That the Lord will make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations,—that prayer will become more earnest and of a more believing character, and that the answers to it will be more distinctly visible,—that the interposition of Divine providence in the affairs of men will be more fully recognized, and will therefore be more clearly seen, and more visibly exercised, I cannot doubt. But as little can I doubt that every one who has taken an intelligent survey of the history of man, and has seen how both the Millennial glory and the following apostacy, are only completing the demonstration given

by that history, that in every state the creature is dependent upon God for all good, will see the necessity of guarding against the admission of the reality of any miracle, however plausible may be its appearance. For if the Millennium be a new dispensation, then not only was John wrong in declaring this to be "the last time," but the new dispensation, instead of carrying on and completing the demonstration of that great truth, for the establishment of which man was made, and all the changes in his history arranged,—nullifies that proof as far as Christianity is concerned, proving its insufficiency; and must be introduced and followed by an apostacy for the purpose of proving something else than that which the whole past history of man has been proving. What this may be, it is useless to conjecture.

These slight hints, into any particular explanation or defence of which this is not the place to enter, may be sufficient to induce the reader to be on his guard against being misled by seeming miracles.

#### NOTE C. PAGE 40.

The following note upon this text, by a Clergyman of the Episcopal church, I think deserves to be transcribed here.

'The Incarnation of our Lord is here declared to be effected by the power of the Most High. Seeing, therefore, it is supernatural and the work of Omnipotence, nothing connected with it, which is plainly revealed to us, may be objected against, because it is out of the ordinary operations of nature, or what would be impossible with man. The power of the Highest might be able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean; and this is in the text plainly set forth. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be

born of thee shall be called the Son of God." But there is something in the words of our common version of this text, which may give rise to an idea for which there is no warrant in the words of the original. In the first place, there are no such words at all in the best copies of the original as should be translated "of thee;"—and, in the next place, in respect of the words "which shall be born," it is to be remarked, that what is in our version given with the *future tense*, is, in the original, distinctly in the *present*; and this is important, as it leads us to a conclusion, that a wrong meaning has been given to the word translated *born*. The proper signification of the original word, in this place of Scripture, we find, by a comparison with Matt. i. 20. in which the same word in a *past tense* is used by the angel, where it cannot by any possibility signify *born*, such a term being wholly inapplicable to the infant not being yet come into the world. "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is *conceived* in her (or as we read in the margin, begotten in her) is of the Holy Ghost." By a comparison of these two passages in Luke and Matthew, we are persuaded, that though the same word may be used to signify born, yet that its true rendering in the passage under consideration, should be this, "therefore also that *holy begotten* thing shall be called the Son of God;" the manifestation in flesh of the Power of the Most High, and the Holiness of the Most High. And thus it will appear that the human nature of Christ not being other than holy in its conception, was in this respect akin to the nature of unfallen Adam, of whom it was said, that though he was formed by the Lord God out of the dust of the ground, yet that he was made in God's image, and in his likeness.'

This view of the text I conceive to be perfectly just, and quite decisive as to the sinlessness of our Lord's human nature.

## NOTE D. PAGE 110.

I have met with some good persons who were not a little perplexed by the declaration, that “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified,” as this seemed to them to imply, either that no man could be saved before that event took place, or that men might be saved without the Spirit; neither of which suppositions they could possibly admit. I must not, therefore, omit to remark, that the Holy Ghost was given long before the coming of Christ, both in his sanctifying and in his miraculous powers. Yet it is not the less true that he was never at any time given excepting in consequence of the glorification of Christ. Had he never been glorified,—the Holy Ghost could never have been given. But then from the moment that he undertook to become obedient unto death, his undertaking of the work of our redemption, and his success in that work were so absolutely certain, that all the benefits of his death were bestowed upon men, long before his death actually took place. He was the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

It may also be remarked that previous to the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, when the “ministration of the Spirit” properly began, whatever gifts or graces men possessed, though they acknowledged God as the author of them, yet they knew not that it was the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost to confer these gifts and graces; and in this view also it may be said that “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Christ was not yet glorified.”

## NOTE E. PAGE 115.

When the word first acquired this meaning I am unable to say; but it occurs at least as early as the Chaldee paraphrase of 2 Samuel xxiv. 24, where David, on purchasing the threshing-floor of Araunah says, "Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price." In the Chaldee it is, I will buy it of thee בדמים. Schleusner, in his Lexicon of the Old Testament Greek, under the word *καταλλαγή*, conjectures that it has derived this meaning from the root דמה *to be like*. High as the authority of that Lexicographer is deservedly held in such matters, I cannot help thinking the conjecture a most unfortunate one. For on the supposition that the word came to signify a 'price' from its connection with the root דמה, I apprehend that no reason can by any possibility be assigned why it should not have been written in the singular number, or at least in the feminine form דמה, or רמות. My own conjecture—and a conjecture may be admitted where nothing better is to be had,—is that the word רמים came to signify a price simply from its connection with atonement. The first thing that could convey the idea of 'price' to man was atonement: for the first thing that he purchased was his forfeited life, and the price that he gave for it was the blood of his sacrifice. Hence blood might naturally come to signify a 'price,' when blood was, in point of fact, the first price ever paid by man. This idea would be confirmed greatly could it be shewn that this is really the meaning of the word in Isaiah ix. 5. This however would not be very easily done, and if it could be done at all, would require more room than I can devote to it in this note.

While I am in the region of conjecture, I may venture to add another. I would infer then, from 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, that the word means such a price as is considered to be a full and



fair equivalent for the thing for which it is paid. It would have suited the design and the feelings of David, to take the threshing-floor so munificently offered him by Araunah, for a merely nominal price, or for any thing under its real value as little as it would have done to receive it for nothing. Whether this view be confirmed by the use of the word, as expressive of a price, in other places, I have no means of ascertaining.

## NOTE F. PAGE 124.

The expression of these sentiments reminds me that I have probably been originally indebted for them to Basil of Seleucia. In his thirty-second Sermon, which is upon the words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," his great object is to rescue this text from the Arians and Eunomians, and to prove that the passion of our Lord was perfectly voluntary. The principal reason that he assigns for our Lord using these words is, that by his own example he might teach his disciples never rashly or unnecessarily to expose themselves to sufferings which they could lawfully avoid; justly observing, that when God calls us to suffering, we can endure what we could not endure if unnecessarily encountered,—a remark the justice of which was often proved by the failure of those who had rashly exposed themselves to suffering. The whole Sermon is devoted to the proof that Christ willingly went to suffer. In connection with the sentiments that I have been expressing, the following passage deserves to be quoted.

‘Do you not see, saith he,—the Arian or Eunomian, namely—*If it be possible*, a dread of suffering? Do you not see a deprecation of the cross? Do you not see the inferiority of the Son? and they make some sophistical reasonings, that they may reproach the Son. But if from this place you accuse the Son, see how you condemn the weakness of the Father also.

For he says, *Father, if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me. But where the help is doubtful, the weakness is manifest. For he does not say, *Father, let the cup pass*, for thou art able; but, *if it be possible*, let it pass. If you will cling to the letter, you must first condemn the Father. If you reproach the Son, you reproach first the Spirit; for of those whose honour is undivided, the reproach is common, which is proved by our Lord's own words to the Father, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." But they bring against us what follows, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Here again is a division of the wills, that there may be not only a distinction of nature, but an opposition of sentiment,—“nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.” You see, saith he, how he entereth suffering unwillingly. But if his passion was involuntary, his resurrection was undesigned. If the cross was without his design, then his grace comes by violence; salvation was not his intention, and without design he saved us. What then meant Paul when he gave thanks and said, “Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief?” What meant the Saviour himself, when he said, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again?”

I need quote no more of the original, than the part that refers more directly to the sentiments expressed in the passage to which this note is appended. ‘Ορας, φησιν, ὡς ακων το παθος εισερχεται; Αλλ’ ει το παθος ακουσιον, αβουλητος η ανασασις, ει παρα γνωμην ο σ αυρος, εκ ειας η χαρις, ου καλα γνωμην η σωτηρια, ου βουλομενος εσωσε.

#### NOTE G. PAGE 288.

It has been argued with great force and justice, by Dr. Burton in his Bampton Lecture, that the belief in the miraculous conception by a portion of the Ebionites, in whose creed it was

a mere useless redundancy, affords one of the strongest possible proofs how essential an article in the Christian creed that article formed; how strong were the proofs of it; and how universally it was believed in the Church. I have mislaid my reference to the passage, and cannot at this moment turn it to quote it, as I intended to do. But every one acquainted with the Socinian controversy, will see at once both the bearing and the value of the argument. That many Ebionites should have denied the miraculous conception, is perfectly natural. That any of them should have believed it, can be accounted for only by admitting that its proof was overwhelming, and its belief universal.

## NOTE H. PAGE 313.

To what extent the doctrine of the traduction of the soul prevailed in primitive times, it perhaps would not be easy to ascertain very exactly; nor is it a matter of any importance, as we have the express testimony of Augustine that they who held that doctrine made an especial exception of the soul of Christ. His testimony on this subject is the more to be relied upon, because of the various opinions as to the origin of the soul, he, though he often treats of the matter, declines to give a decisive preference to one more than another. His sentiments may be seen in the following passage.

“ For that Jesus was dead as to his soul, that is, as to his human spirit, who will dare to affirm? Since the death of the soul is nothing else than sin, from which he was perfectly free when he died for us in the flesh. For if the souls of all men are derived from that one soul which was breathed into the first man, by whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so passed upon all men; either the soul of Christ was not thence derived, since he had no sin whatever, either original

or personal, for which death might be due to him,—for, for us was that death which he did not owe, paid by him in whom the prince of this world, the lord of death, found nothing;—nor is it absurd to suppose that he who created a soul for the first man, should create one also for himself: or if even his soul was thence derived, he purified it in the assumption, that coming to us, he might be born of a virgin, without any sin whatever, either committed or derived. But if souls be not propagated from that one soul, and the flesh alone draws original sin from Adam, then the Son of God created a soul for himself, just as he does for others; which however he mingled not with sinful flesh, but with the *likeness* of sinful flesh. For he took of the Virgin, the true substance of flesh indeed, but not sinful flesh; as it was neither begotten nor conceived by carnal concupiscence; mortal indeed and changing through the different stages of growth, as being, without sin, most like to sinful flesh.”

Nam quod fuerit anima mortificatus Jesus, hoc est, eo spiritu qui hominis est, quis audeat dicere? cum mors animæ non sit nisi peccatum, a quo ille omnino immunis fuit, cum pro nobis carne mortificaretur. Si enim omnium hominum animæ quæ illa una sunt, quæ insufflata est primo homini, per quem peccatum intravit in mundum, et per peccatum mors, et ita in omnes homines pertransiit; aut non est, inde anima Christi, quoniam nullum habuit omnino peccatum, vel originale vel proprium, propter quod ei mors debita videretur; pro nobis eam quippe quam non debebat exsolvit, in quo princeps mundi, mortisque præpositus nihil invenit: neque enim absurdum est, ut qui primo homini animam creavit, crearet et sibi: aut si et ipsa inde est, eam suscipiendo mundavit, ut sine ullo prorsus peccato, vel perpetrato vel traducto, ad nos veniens de virgine nasceretur. Si autem animæ non ex illa una propagantur, et sola ex Adam caro trahit originale peccatum, ita sibi creavit animam Dei Filius, ut cæteris creat, quam non tamen carni

peccati miscuit, sed similitudine carnis peccati. Sumsit enim ex Virgine veram quidem carnis substantiam, non tamen peccati carnem, quia non ex carnali concupiscentia, sive seminatam, sive conceptam; mortalem sane, ac per ætates mutabilem, tamquam carni peccati sine peccato simillimam. Epist. clxiv. Sect. 19.

## NOTE I, PAGE 374.

Bayle thinks, or affects to think, that it was a happy circumstance for Christianity that Augustine ceased to be a Manichean; as with his talents he would probably have formed Manichæism into a system which would have proved a dangerous rival to the gospel. I readily admit that it was a happy circumstance that Augustine ceased to be a Manichean; but I cannot admit that Christianity would have been endangered, had even the powerful talents of one of its brightest ornaments been arrayed against it. Happily it rests upon something more powerful by far than the talents of its ablest advocates. But there has always existed a leaven of Manichæism, which is the more carefully to be guarded against now, when its fundamental tenet is openly advocated. That it is advocated by men who are not aware that they are doing so, only makes the danger the greater.

I may here notice a remark of Dr. Priestley, who when speaking of Augustine, says:—‘Who is well known to have been a Manichæan.’ This is a good instance of the way in which all the effect of falsehood may be produced, without stating one word that is not literally true. Augustine is indeed well known to have been a Manichæan; but the impression left on the mind of the reader,—and I fear I must add, *intended* to be left is, that he never was any thing else. The fact, that he became the most active and successful opponent of that system, is kept out of sight.



## NOTE K. PAGE 420.

The best source of information to which I can refer the reader on this subject is Burton's Bampton Lecture, where besides much important and interesting matter with regard to the heresies of the first century, he will find copious references to writers in whom more detailed particulars may be had. I can the more confidently recommend this work, that, having had occasion to verify most of his references to ancient writers, I have uniformly found them made with such accuracy, and selected with such skill, and the conclusions to which they point developed with such judgment, as to make the Book a real treasure to those who have not access to the original sources of information. I would strongly recommend it to all students of Theology. Burton is a writer to whom they may safely commit themselves, without the fear of being misled. I have rarely indeed read an author from whose conclusions I have so seldom seen reason to differ.

I rejoice to learn that the same author is delivering a course of lectures upon the ecclesiastical history of the *first* century. Few subjects can be more important, and perhaps there is no man equally well qualified to do it ample justice. I trust that he will, in due time, find it convenient to give his lectures to the public. There is a Professorship of Ecclesiastical History in Edinburgh; but of which I fear the students do not avail themselves so extensively as they ought. It is to be hoped that they who are called upon to admit young men to holy orders, will become more and more alive to the importance of ascertaining that they are well instructed upon this point. And surely this can never be done by merely examining them upon, or even making them write the history of any given century, the *sixteenth* for example. Deeply important as is the history of that period, yet a man may be not only an able

preacher of the doctrines of the Gospel, but an accomplished expounder of Scripture, even though he had never heard that such a period as the sixteenth century had ever occurred in the annals of time. Can as much be said for him who is ignorant of, or only superficially acquainted with the history of the first century? As it is most desirable that every preacher of the Gospel should be able to expound the Scripture for himself, without being compelled to depend upon commentators, from whom in many cases he will find but little help, they who neglect to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from the Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, are guilty of a very serious dereliction of their duty. For myself, I can say, that I was never more deeply interested in, or derived more essential benefit from any course of Lectures than I ever attended, than those of Doctor Meiklejohn, on Ecclesiastical History.

## NOTE L. PAGE 423.

The opinions of the Gnostics, with regard to matter, may at first sight appear to be of comparatively trifling importance, or at least of a much less fatal nature than those heresies which strike directly at the vitals of religion, such as those that deny the Divinity of the Saviour, or maintain his peccability; and therefore though the eternity of matter be an opinion contradictory to Scripture,—and even this has been denied—yet it is a contradiction that does not require to be so earnestly and decidedly met as such heresies. But in reality the Gnostic notions as to matter are not less decidedly fatal than these, or any heresies can be. For, *first*, if matter be not the creature of God, then it is something independent upon him. He may be able to modify it, but he cannot destroy what he did not produce. And this, by no long or intricate process of reason-

ing leads directly to Atheism. *Next*, if matter be inherently evil, then the doctrine of the resurrection is to be abhorred, as it was by the Gnostics ; for the resurrection just reunites us to that which is essentially evil, and in a complete emancipation from which our salvation consists. Hence they strongly denied the resurrection ; and the Fathers horrified at this havoc of the hopes of the Christian, not only maintained the truth of the resurrection, but it must be admitted, in order to escape as far as possible from the Gnostics, seemed in a great measure to overlook the fact, that what is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body, and that our evil bodies shall be changed that they may be like the glorious body of our Lord ; and so earnestly taught our entrance into heaven in all the gross dimensions of flesh and blood, as fairly to give the advantage in the argument to the Gnostics, as has been repeatedly remarked. That matter is inherently evil is a doctrine so destructive of the resurrection, that the Fathers, in opposing it, did not in their zeal see, that they were often verging upon the very opposite extreme. *Again*, if matter be evil,—whether it was so from eternity, or became so by the fall, if such a thing were possible, signifies nothing—then the Incarnation is denied. A pure and holy God may work upon matter which is evil, and he may work with such matter as an instrument ; and of such matter he may form a human body, and endue it with a human soul, and through that man he may possibly reveal his will, and in that man he may possibly operate by a mighty influence to the working of many wondrous works. But that he should take such matter into his own personal constitution so that it may be fairly called himself, or part of himself,—that he should be so united to a body formed of such matter that when the officer struck this body on the cheek he could say, “ Why smitest thou *Me* ? ”—or when it was fastened to the cross, it could be said the Lord of glory was crucified ;—that such matter should be,

not the temple merely, not the tabernacle, the organ or instrument of God, but the very body of God, is an idea so utterly repugnant to all that we have been taught to think and to feel concerning God, that I know of no Catholic, and of no Gnostic, that ever entertained it. The latter, maintaining that all matter and therefore that flesh was essentially evil, denied the Incarnation. Such of them as admitted the reality of our Lord's body, also admitted readily enough that Christ dwelt in Jesus, and used him as his instrument, a man whom, even before his anointing at his baptism, they describe as more wise and holy than all other men ; but that Jesus was Christ, they most determinedly denied. The Catholics on the contrary maintained that Jesus was Christ, that the heavenly did not dwell in the earthly, did not merely use him as his instrument, did not inspire him, but that "The Word was made flesh." Hence they not only denied the evil of matter, in which they were certainly right, and on this point might fairly have defeated the Gnostics ; but in their zeal went so far as to maintain that there is nothing in flesh and blood unfit for the kingdom of heaven, thus giving the Gnostics a clear advantage over them. Yet we are called upon to believe that even in Christ, flesh was a fallen sinful thing ! *Finally*, if the Incarnation be denied, I need hardly say that atonement also is denied. And should the Catholic have conceded to the Gnostic the grand principle on which he built these ruinous consequences, and admitted that the flesh of Christ was sinful, what had he left himself in the Gospel that was worth defending ; or what ground had he left himself upon which it might be defended ?

Thus the Gnostic notions as to matter effectually swept away every doctrine of the Gospel. In support of these notions they urged the sinfulness of flesh,—though they were not bold enough to ascribe such flesh to Christ ; but rather either denied that he took flesh at all, or maintained that he

only dwelt in the flesh as in a temple without any personal union with it. Their notions may again become fashionable; for when men once leave the simplicity of Scripture, they can have no security that they shall not fall into the same errors which, under similar circumstances, have misled men before. Even a wilder effort may be made in support of such notions than the Gnostics ventured to make; and sinfulness may be ascribed to the "Holy One of God." And when we find the Gnostics urging in support of their notions those texts of Scripture which describe our flesh as a fallen sinful thing; and when we find the Catholics contesting their exposition and application of these texts, we may be told that on this ground there was no contest between them whatever, nay that the Catholics went farther than any Gnostic ever ventured to go, and not only maintained flesh to be an evil thing, but actually taught that even in our Lord Jesus Christ, flesh was fallen and sinful. We may be told,—we are told this; but is it in the power of any human being to believe it?

#### NOTE M. PAGE 490.

The note of Heroetus upon this passage is, *αναμαρτητος*. Id est, si dici posset Latine, *Impeccabilis*, id est, qui nec peccat, nec potest peccare. *Ανεπιλεπτον*, id est, *qui non potest reprehendi*. Est autem unum alteri consequens. Nam si nihil potest reprehendi præter peccatum, sequitur ut qui non possit reprehendi, non peccet. Had the learned commentator recollected the Answers to the Orthodox, attributed to Justin, though some of them at least are plainly of a later age, he might have found a definition of the first of these words which would have put the purity of his Latin to no hazard. Question 141 is, 'If Christ alone kept the law of God perfectly, how is it said of Zacharias and Elizabeth that they walked in the law blame-



less,—*αμεμπτοι*—and how does Paul say that touching the righteousness of the law he was blameless,—*αμεμπτος*? The reply is, “Blameless—*αμεμπτον*—is one thing, and sinless—*αναμαρτητον*—is another thing. He who is sinless, is altogether blameless; but he who is blameless is not of necessity sinless. For he who commits a sin against the law, which can be forgiven through sacrifice and confession, having obtained forgiveness becomes pure and blameless according to the righteousness which is of the law. But Christ being sinless, and never transgressing the law, did nothing which stood in need of correction. He admitted John the Baptist, and was baptized of him, that he might fulfil all righteousness; which Paul, before he believed in Christ, had not received, else he would not have persecuted the Church. For this reason, Christ alone is said to be sinless—*αναμαρτητος*.

This word may, I believe, be properly enough translated ‘impeccable’ wherever it is used by the Fathers. I have sometimes translated it by that word, and sometimes ‘sinless,’ commonly taking the word that first suggested itself, with little discrimination. Where it occurs in these extracts, the reader may commonly use the one or the other word, without affecting the purpose for which the extract is made.

#### NOTE N. PAGE 545.

Priestley, speaking of the Gnostics, says,—‘The principles of this system, whatever we may think of it at present, must have been exceedingly captivating at the time of their publication, as many excellent men were much taken with them. This was the case with Epiphanius’ and some others whom he names. With respect to Epiphanius, I recollect not that he expresses any admiration that he had ever felt for Gnostic doctrines, though he expresses his thankfulness for having

escaped that system. When he was a young man, two females were employed to *convert* him ; for the desecration of female influence and eloquence to give currency to doctrines which can hardly hope for success by ordinary means, is no modern invention. There are doubtless many legitimate ways in which such influence may be employed in the most praiseworthy manner ; but ever since Eve preached heresy in Paradise, I confess I more than doubt whether ever any female did good to the world or credit to herself, by entering upon the rugged paths of controversy, or engaging in the public discussion of disputed points in Theology. Now if we assume, as we have every reason to do, that the females employed to convert Epiphanius were neither old nor ugly, nor yet infested with a more rigid virtue than Gnosticism required, we may easily see how the young man might have reason to thank God for his escape, without supposing that he saw anything very captivating in the principle of Gnosticism. That system I suspect was commonly more indebted to its practices than its principles. If I am asked what these practices were, I can only reply, that he who has gone through the repulsive details, as given by Epiphanius himself, is a more resolute reader than I can pretend to be.

But that the *principles* of Gnosticism should meet with admirers, even among those who had no wish to take advantage of the licentious application of which they were so naturally susceptible, and which they so commonly received, can be matter of no surprise ; for when a man refuses to subject his understanding to the word of God, and to receive its dictates with all the docility of a little child, there is no absurdity of which he may not become an admirer. I have always considered the fame of Hume as one of the most affecting and instructive proofs of the utter imbecility, and the wild wanderings of the human mind, when rejecting the guidance of God and of his Word. He was raised to the throne of Philosophy,

a situation which I suppose he still occupies in the estimation of many, for giving to the world what is neither more nor less than a very paltry and mutilated edition of the Jewish Cabbala. That system taught that there is no such thing as matter, all things being only an extension of the substance of God. But then it taught that he could make these extensions when he pleased, and how he pleased ; and never did make them but under the direction of unerring wisdom, and for the most benevolent purposes. Now take from this system all that can redeem it from unmingled contempt ; remove from it the voluntary action of God, and connect with it the doctrine of necessity, thus stamping it with that character of Atheism which in its original form it does not bear,—alterations in which Hume had not even the poor merit of being original,—and you have the sum and substance of Hume's philosophy. It is only truth that is truly boundless. The range of error is extremely limited. And unless the mind be subjected without reserve to the teaching of God, by his Word and Spirit, there is nothing to save us from very cordially adopting, and very firmly believing the wildest absurdities, and the grossest errors that we laugh at or reprobate, in the dreams of earlier speculators. We may give them new names, and clothe them in new dresses, and paint them in new colours ; but their nature and substance remains the same. The philosophy of Hume is to be found in the Jewish Cabbala ; and the fundamental tenets of Gnosticism are revived in the doctrine that the flesh of Christ was fallen sinful flesh.

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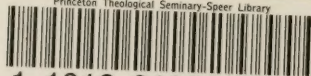
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